OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

CANADA'S FIRST POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

Employment and Social Development Canada
Emploi et Développement social Canada

Canada

Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication....1

Minister's Message....2

Foreword from Miles Corak, Economist-In-Residence at Employment and Social Development Canada....4

Executive Summary....6

Chapter 1 – Opportunity for All....8

Chapter 2 – Taking Stock of Accomplishments....19

Chapter 3 – Dignity....32

Chapter 4 – Opportunity and Inclusion....35

Chapter 5 – Resilience and Security....39

Chapter 6 – Working with Provinces, Territories and Communities....42

Chapter 7 – Working with Indigenous Peoples....46
- First Nations....48
- Inuit....49
- Métis....50

Chapter 8 – Ensuring a Lasting Impact....51

Chapter 9 – Improving Measurement of Poverty....54

Chapter 10 – Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)....57

Chapter 11 – Going Forward: Canada in 2030....62

Annex 1 – The Statistical Fine Print....65

Annex 2 – Government Initiatives that Support Poverty Reduction....81

DEDICATION

To those who persevere despite facing the daily, all-consuming weight of poverty, exclusion, discrimination, ignorance, and hopelessness...and to those who work tirelessly to strengthen our communities by lifting others up.

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Two and a half years ago, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau gave me the mandate to develop Canada's first-ever national poverty reduction strategy. I was honoured to be given this important task, as it is something I feel passionate about, and have for some time. After working as a researcher and a professor of economics for 23 years, my quest for a solution to poverty inspired me to become a politician.

To develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy, we began by listening. I have been fortunate to meet with and hear from thousands and thousands of Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Through roundtables and town halls, in person and online, via conversations and conferences, I have heard diverse experiences and insights on how we can understand and reduce poverty in this country.

The range of voices we heard during our consultation process allowed us to get a better understanding of poverty and ways to reduce it. We heard from and engaged with other orders of government—from provinces, territories and municipalities—as well as from our First Nations, Inuit, and Métis partners. We heard from members of my advisory committee, drawn from Canada's incredible range of social, cultural and economic backgrounds. We heard from academics and researchers. We heard from people working on the front lines of tackling poverty. Most importantly, we heard from Canadians with lived experiences of poverty.

These Canadians spoke of the importance of providing opportunity for all; they spoke about dignity, inclusion, security, resilience and empowerment; and they spoke about the damages of "us versus them" attitudes, language and policies.

It is my great honour and privilege to take the stories, concerns and accomplishments that Canadians shared with us and use them as the basis for developing a strategy that reflects the fundamental needs and the highest aspirations of all Canadians—a strategy built on the same pillars that enable our middle class to succeed:

- Living in dignity;
- providing opportunity and inclusion; and
- enhancing resilience and security.

At the 2018 G7 meeting, the Prime Minister emphasized that *"we need to ensure that growth works for everyone, so that all can benefit from their hard work, and so that all are able to enjoy a higher quality of life."* Canada's first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy is built on the vision that whoever they are, and wherever they originally came from, all Canadians should be able to live in dignity. Canada's first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy is built on the belief that all Canadians deserve to be treated fairly and to have the means and the abilities to grow and fully participate in the development of their communities. And Canada's first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy is built on the vision that all Canadians should have a sense of security and be hopeful that

tomorrow will be better than today for them, for their loved ones and for the generations to come.

To be effective, Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy must have transparent indicators, clear targets and tangible actions. That is why Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy is introducing, for the first time ever, an official poverty line for Canada, as well as targets to reduce poverty by 20 percent by 2020 and 50 percent by 2030 based on the official measure of poverty. The Strategy also introduces a set of indicators to measure and monitor meaningful dimensions of poverty and inclusion. Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy also supports data sharing, knowledge creation and engagement with Canadians, in part by establishing a National Advisory Council on Poverty, enshrined into law.

Taken together, this vision and these actions will help ensure that Canada's first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy provides all Canadians with a real and fair chance to succeed.

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

FOREWORD FROM MILES CORAK, ECONOMIST IN RESIDENCE AT EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA

What is a "poverty reduction strategy"? How is it useful?

In one sense, it is surely actions taken, programs designed, monies spent. And that is how this document begins: a list of policies, programs and budgets that the Government has undertaken, and for which politicians want to be given credit. The federal government can rightly claim that it has been pursuing a "poverty reduction strategy" from the day it was elected in October 2015.

But for citizens, whether poor, rich or middle class, this is not good enough. A poverty reduction strategy must also be a clearly stated set of priorities that reflect our concerns; priorities that are paired with measurable targets allowing us to plot a path to somewhere better. This collection of targets, timelines and indicators is also a "poverty reduction strategy" because it gives citizens a way to hold governments to account, to focus attention not just on money spent—our money after all—but also on the connection between actions and outcomes. Credit is due, not when budgets are spent, but when outcomes we care about are efficiently and effectively achieved.

This document also offers a strategy in this sense. It defines for the first time an official indicator of poverty, setting clear targets and timelines to lower the fraction of Canadians living in poverty, and offering three sets of complementary signposts recognizing that poverty is about more than just money.

I am an outsider who was invited inside: a professor at the University of Ottawa given the opportunity to work in the Deputy Minister's office during 2017 as the Economist in Residence, and as a member of the team of public servants supporting Minister Duclos's efforts in building Canada's first official Poverty Reduction Strategy.

In my life as an academic, I have developed a great respect for the ideas of the Nobel Prize winning economist Amartya Sen. One of Professor Sen's more influential books is called "Development as Freedom," and I believe he used the word "development" in two ways: to refer to economic growth and prosperity, but also to refer to personal growth and well-being.

We "develop" as individuals and citizens when we have the freedom to choose the life we value.

This, it seems to me, is the task to which Canadians expect their political leaders to be devoted: to listen to the projects that citizens hold dear, to recognize the barriers they face and to work hard toward lightening this load, removing those barriers and developing their freedom to choose.

In my year as a public servant, I witnessed a process of unparalleled consultation across the country, with communities and front-line workers, with stakeholders and researchers, and most importantly with citizens who have lived in poverty, who have escaped it or who feel insecure as a result of it.

The Minister clearly fostered the opportunity to hear the projects and concerns citizens hold dear. What they told him gives Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy its purpose.

This cannot be just about numbers, indicators, targets: whether or not Statistics Canada tells us that some statistic took an uptick or a dip a year and a half ago? Whether a certain percentage of 15 year olds pass some sort of literacy test? Or whether a young household has put a bit of money aside?

Rather, it is about whether Canadians have the resources, monetary or otherwise, to live life with dignity and to participate normally in society; about whether the young have a solid education that will open doors for them; about whether those doors are open free of discrimination so that everyone's skills and talents are recognized; about whether families are confident about the future, knowing they can deal with the challenges that tomorrow will surely bring.

Dignity, opportunity, resilience.

These three words summarize the concerns the Minister heard. They reflect the moral purpose that motivates a poverty reduction strategy, that underlies the indicators and targets, and that ultimately makes the strategy useful.

But Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy will prove its use with time, it will have staying power, if the same spirit of consultation continues and fosters both a sense of ownership among Canadians, and an ongoing sense of urgency among this and future governments. Our politicians will need to continue listening, and we will need to continue voicing our concerns using the measuring rods in this document, but also continually refining and adapting them to better reflect what it means to fully participate in an ever-changing Canadian community.

Miles Corak
Economist in Residence, 2017
Employment and Social Development Canada

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canada is a prosperous country, yet in 2015 roughly one in eight Canadians lived in poverty. The vision of *Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy* is a Canada without poverty, because we all suffer when our fellow citizens are left behind. We are all in this together, from governments, to community organizations, to the private sector, to all Canadians who are working hard each and every day to provide for themselves and their families.

The Government is committed to poverty reduction and did not wait to release a poverty reduction strategy before taking action. For example, the new **Canada Child Benefit** gives more money to families who need it most to help with the cost of raising children. The increase to the **Guaranteed Income Supplement** ensures more seniors can retire in security and dignity. And, starting in 2019, the new **Canada Workers Benefit** will help Canadians take home more money while they work hard to join the middle class.

The Government has also made longer-term investments in areas such as housing, clean water, health, transportation, early learning and child care, and skills and employment, which will help address multiple dimensions of poverty.

Overall, *Opportunity for All* brings together new investments of $22 billion that the Government has made since 2015 to support the social and economic well-being of all Canadians. These actions **will help lift about 650,000 Canadians out of poverty by 2019**, with more expected as the impacts of these investments are realized in the years to come.

Opportunity for All also sets the foundation for future government investments in poverty reduction. It is based on three pillars to focus Government actions to reduce poverty:

Dignity: Lifting Canadians out of poverty by ensuring basic needs—such as safe and affordable housing, healthy food and health care—are met;

Opportunity and Inclusion: Helping Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity; and

Resilience and Security: Supporting the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience.

Opportunity for All offers a bold vision for Canada as a world leader in the eradication of poverty, with progress validated in terms of its alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of ending poverty.

For the first time in Canada's history, the Strategy **sets an official measure of poverty**: **Canada's Official Poverty Line**, based on the cost of a basket of goods and services that individuals and families require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in communities across the country.

Opportunity for All sets, for the first time, ambitious and **concrete poverty reduction targets:** a 20 percent reduction in poverty by 2020 and a 50 percent reduction in poverty by 2030, which, relative to 2015 levels, will **lead to the lowest poverty rate in Canada's history**.

Through *Opportunity for All*, we are putting in place a **National Advisory Council on Poverty** to advise the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development on poverty reduction and to publicly report, in each year, on the progress that has been made toward poverty reduction.

The Government also proposes to introduce the first **Poverty Reduction Act** in Parliament in Canada's history. This Act would entrench the targets, Canada's Official Poverty Line and the Advisory Council into legislation.

Opportunity for All is a whole-of-government Strategy that involves actions and investments that span across the federal government. However, the Government recognizes that to be successful, it cannot act alone. Partnerships will be important. The Government will work closely with provinces, territories and municipalities, and will forge strong bonds with Indigenous peoples, stakeholders, charities and community groups on the front lines of tackling poverty in communities across Canada, to ensure our programs and policies are aligned and complementary, as Canadians expect and deserve nothing less. And, finally, the Government will continue to reach out to all Canadians who all have a stake in Opportunity for All, particularly those who live in poverty.

The Government will continually track and make improvements to how poverty is measured. Progress will therefore be measured against, and future decisions will be informed by, evidence that is based on the highest statistical standards, building on the Prime Minister's leadership and the commitment G7 leaders made this year to measure growth that works for everyone.

The Government will advance the dialogue with Canadians from all corners of the country, so we can continue to build a Canada without poverty.

Opportunity for All will help reduce poverty, support Canadians working hard to join the middle class and build a diverse, prosperous and truly inclusive country where everyone benefits from economic growth—a country where all Canadians can realize their full potential.

> ***Poverty is:***
> ***The condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society.***

CHAPTER 1: OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

Canadians have long been ambitious about reducing poverty. Channelling this ambition, *Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy*, sets a bold vision for Canada as a world leader in the eradication of poverty: a vision for a Canada without poverty.

While there are many definitions of poverty, it can be understood as the condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society.

While some Canadians may be more vulnerable to poverty than others, no one is immune. Some individuals work two or three jobs but still live on a low income. Others are working hard to get ahead but face individual, structural and systemic barriers, including discrimination.

And some Canadians have joined the middle class but might lack the resources needed to make it through life's setbacks, such as a job loss, sudden illness, or family trauma.

While poverty affects everyone differently, when some Canadians are left behind, all Canadians are impacted. Poverty affects the

> *"There could be a campaign to change the image that people have of us. The image should be of survivors: 'I am a survivor. Yes we can.'"*
>
> – Single mother, Trois-Rivières, Quebec, Tackling Poverty Together Project

strength and resilience of our communities. People living in poverty are more likely to face health-related setbacks, to have difficulty finding and keeping a job, to find themselves in the criminal justice system, and to need various social supports and assistance. Also, children who grow up in poverty are more likely to remain in poverty as they age.

In a country as wealthy as Canada, we cannot stand by while our fellow citizens struggle. By working to reduce poverty, Canada will promote economic growth, foster community and help more Canadians join the middle class.

Opportunity for All is about working together to end poverty so that all Canadians can live with dignity, have real and fair access to opportunities to succeed, and be resilient enough to get through difficult times. Living with dignity means that Canadians would be living without hunger and would have enough income to meet their basic needs; having access to opportunities means that Canadians would be able to move out of poverty and acquire the skills, education and jobs they need to be at their best; and being resilient means Canadians would have the income security and social supports they need to rebound from life's setbacks.

Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy offers an inspiring vision, while also recognizing that mere vision is not enough. The Strategy sets, for the first time ever, an official poverty line for Canada as well as concrete targets for poverty reduction that are intended to become the law of the land. It also sets out specific indicators that will be used to monitor progress toward a country that we all want: a Canada in which hard work allows families to be better off; a Canada where everyone is treated fairly; a Canada in which all children can grow up to become all they can be; and a Canada in which seniors are secure, valued and living in dignity.

In creating this Strategy, the Government has looked at and learned from examples from coast to coast to coast: from Indigenous peoples, from provinces and territories, and from cities like Edmonton, Toronto, St. John's and the many other municipalities across Canada that have poverty reduction strategies in place offering ambitious goals and indicators to measure progress. The Government has looked beyond Canada's borders as well, to learn from what other countries have done to better understand and reduce poverty. The Government has also worked with stakeholders, community leaders and organizations, and businesses. Perhaps most importantly, the Government has listened to Canadians living in poverty or with lived experience of poverty and working hard to provide for themselves and their families.

Opportunity for All ***began by listening.***

Thousands of Canadians from coast to coast to coast shared with us what it is like to live in poverty, how government programs could support them and where further work could be done to provide even more support. Most importantly, the Government reached out to people living in poverty so their voices could be heard and their views shared. Ultimately, all these Canadians—including those who bear the heavy burden of poverty and those working tirelessly to strengthen our communities—told us what they wanted to see in a poverty reduction strategy.

Opportunity for All is guided by the thousands of voices we have heard and, in particular, the voices of those with lived experience of poverty. Canadians told us that poverty is complex, that different groups experience different risks of poverty and different challenges in getting out of poverty, and that reducing it requires a long-term commitment as well as calls for a coordinated approach with diverse groups—government and non-government alike. Canadians told us that the Strategy must contribute to a national effort to reduce poverty. It must also recognize that when some members of our communities cannot reach their full potential, we are all affected.

More specifically, Canadians have said that the Poverty Reduction Strategy should be about:

- **Dignity** – Lifting Canadians out of poverty by ensuring everyone's basic needs are met;
- **Opportunity and Inclusion** – Helping Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity; and
- **Resilience and Security** – Supporting the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience.

Introducing Canada's Official Poverty Line

For the first time in our country's history, the Government will set an official measure of poverty.

Canada's Official Poverty Line will be calculated using what is currently known as the Market Basket Measure. Canada's Official Poverty Line reflects the combined costs of a basket of goods and services that individuals and families require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living. The basket includes items such as healthy food, appropriate shelter and home maintenance, and clothing and transportation. It also includes other goods and services that permit engagement in the community, particularly for children, youth, parents and seniors.

The cost of each item in the basket is directly linked to the prices of these items in communities across Canada. Canada's Official Poverty Line reflects poverty thresholds for 50 different regions across the country, including 19 specific communities. Wherever individuals and families are living across the country, if they cannot afford the cost of this basket of goods and services in their particular community, they are considered to be living below Canada's Official Poverty Line—that is, living in poverty. Statistics Canada will update the basket to reflect the reality of what is needed to participate in society today and going forward, with further updates taking place on a regular basis.

Canada's Official Poverty Line is the first official poverty line in Canada's history.

Snapshot of

CANADA'S OFFICIAL POVERTY LINE

in Winnipeg, Manitoba

Stephanie and Abdou live in Winnipeg with their two children, Sarah and Myron.

In 2015, their annual, after-tax income was

$36,544

which was equal to Canada's Official Poverty Line in Winnipeg.

The **patterns of consumption** upon which Canada's Official Poverty Line is based would suggest that, on average, a family like Stephanie and Abdou's, living on the poverty line in Winnipeg, would have enough money to spend approximately the amounts shown below to meet their basic needs and maintain a modest standard of living over the course of a year:*

Clothing and Footwear
$1,820 or $150 per month

Transportation
$3,060 or $260 per month

Nutritious Food
$11,440 or
$950 per month

Shelter
(including electricity, heat, clean water)
$10,240 or
$850 per month

Other Goods and Services
(including personal care items, basic telephone service, reading, recreation, entertainment, and school supplies)
$9,990 or $830 per month

Winnipeg is one of 50 regions across the country where Canada's Official Poverty Line is calculated. During 2015, Canada's Official Poverty Line for a family of two adults and two children averaged $37,542 across the 50 regions for which it is calculated, varying from $32,871 in parts of the province of Quebec, to $40,777 in parts of the province of Alberta. For individuals living on their own it is half as high, ranging from $16,436 to $20,389.

* Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

Setting and Legislating Poverty Reduction Targets

For the first time in Canada's history, the Government will set measurable targets for poverty reduction. The Government intends to entrench these targets in legislation.

Specifically, Canada's Official Poverty Line will be used to measure progress toward two ambitious but realistic targets:

- by 2020, reducing the poverty rate by 20 percent from its 2015 level; and
- by 2030, reducing the poverty rate by 50 percent from its 2015 level.

In 2015, 1 in every 8 Canadians (about 12 percent) lived in poverty. Meeting these targets will mark a significant reduction in poverty in our country, reducing the number of Canadians living in poverty to 1 in 10 (about 10 percent) by 2020, and to 1 in 17 by 2030 (a target of 6 percent).

We are already working hard to meet these ambitious targets.

Government investments since 2015 will help lift about 650,000 Canadians out of poverty by 2019.

Since 2015, the Government has invested in the social and economic well-being of Canadians. For example:

- The new Canada Child Benefit gives more money to families who need it most, to help with the cost of raising children.
- The increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement top-up ensures more seniors can retire in security and dignity.
- And, starting in 2019, the new Canada Workers Benefit will help Canadians take home more money while they work hard to join the middle class.

"Government should be ambitious in setting targets and timelines to reduce and eradicate poverty—the credibility of the strategy depends on it."

– Campaign 2000 submission: "Federal Action to Eradicate Poverty"

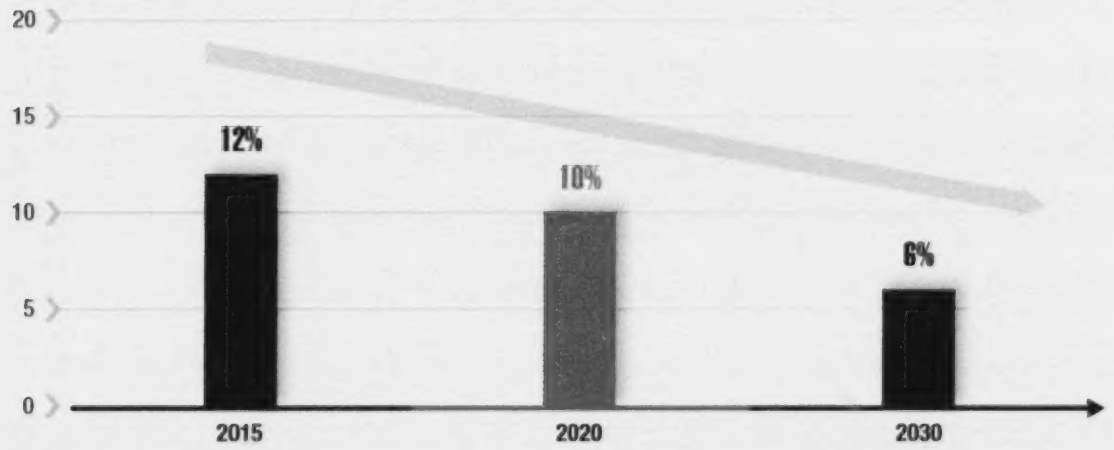
Indeed, this government's actions will help lift about 650,000 Canadians out of poverty by 2019, with more expected as the impacts of these investments are realized in the years to come. The Government has also made longer-term investments in areas such as housing, clean water, health, transportation, early learning and child care, and skills and employment, which will help reduce the incidence of other dimensions of poverty.

"An effective anti-poverty plan must have clear and realistic goals, as well as realistic timelines to achieve these goals, using widely accepted measures of progress. The benchmarks for the timelines must be concrete enough, and frequent enough, that a government can be held accountable within its mandate."

– Dignity for All campaign submission: "A National Anti-Poverty Plan for Canada"

Meeting the Targets Would Lead to Lowest Poverty Rate in Canada's History

Reducing Poverty Rate from 12 percent in 2015 to 10 percent in 2020 and 6 percent in 2030 (amounts rounded to nearest percent).



Tracking Progress

For our objectives to be achieved, the journey to achieving them must be guided by meaningful, measurable and monitorable indicators. Progress will be tracked not only by measuring the poverty rate based on Canada's Official Poverty Line, but also by using a dashboard of other indicators, which will be made available online so Canadians can track progress in poverty reduction.

Opportunity for All also invests in Canada's statistical infrastructure to make all of these indicators more useful, reliable and detailed in their coverage, and of a quality that aligns with the highest standards.

REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY

By 20% by 2020 and by 50% by 2030, as measured by Canada's Official Poverty Line

DIGNITY

Lift Canadians out of poverty by ensuring basic needs are met

Food insecurity

Unmet health needs

Unmet housing needs and chronic homelessness

Deep income poverty

OPPORTUNITY and INCLUSION

Help Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity

Literacy and numeracy

Youth engagement

Relative low income

Bottom 40% income share

RESILIENCE and SECURITY

Support the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience

Median hourly wage

Poverty entry and exit rates

Average poverty gap

Asset resilience

Ensuring Accountability to Canadians

To ensure accountability to Canadians, the Government is establishing a **National Advisory Council on Poverty** with a mandate to both advise the Government on poverty reduction and to report publicly to Parliament and Canadians on the progress it has made toward meeting the targets every year. As part of its role, the Council will also foster a national dialogue on poverty reduction.

Poverty Reduction Legislation

To cement the Government's commitment to reducing poverty, the Government proposes to introduce a new **Poverty Reduction Act** in Parliament. The Act would make Canada's Official Poverty Line and the poverty reduction targets the law of the land. The Act would also enshrine the Council in legislation so that poverty reduction would remain a priority for all governments in the future.

Working with Partners

To be successful, the Government cannot act alone. The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Poverty has been instrumental in helping the Government develop a Strategy that reflects the views of all Canadians, in particular those with a lived experience of poverty. Moving forward, partnerships will continue to be important. The Government will work closely with provinces, territories and municipalities, and will forge strong bonds with Indigenous peoples, stakeholders, charities and community groups on the front lines of tackling poverty in communities across Canada, to ensure our programs and policies are aligned and complementary, as Canadians expect and deserve nothing less. As tackling poverty is a shared responsibility, the Government is also inviting the private sector—businesses large and small—to do its part. We are all in this together, and we are all better off when no one is left to struggle alone.

The Government will continue to work in partnership with Indigenous organizations to realize a Canada where we have achieved meaningful reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis. As part of *Opportunity for All*, this will mean recognizing the unique understanding and experience of poverty amongst Indigenous peoples, supporting autonomy and empowerment, and building on investments to date that take a distinctions-based approach, where programming is designed with and for Indigenous peoples.

Canada as a World Leader in Poverty Reduction

Opportunity for All also engages Canada with the world. Our targets and indicators are reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. This is further evidence that we are on the right path.

Canada was one of 150 countries to adopt a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each of the 17 goals has specific targets to be achieved by 2030. Canada's longer-term target set out in *Opportunity for All*—to reduce poverty by 50 percent by 2030—reflects our commitment to the first Sustainable Development Goal: "By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children

of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions." Meeting this target will help fulfill the vision of Canada as a world leader in poverty reduction.

In addition, six other Sustainable Development Goals are aligned with and support the indicators, beyond income, that *Opportunity for All* will use to monitor progress toward reducing poverty. These goals relate to food security; health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work; and reduced inequalities. *Opportunity for All* supports these goals and reflects their spirit and intent.

Poverty Reduction and Human Rights

The vision of *Opportunity for All* is to eradicate poverty because we are all better off when no one is left behind. *Opportunity for All* supports a human rights-based approach to poverty reduction, reflecting principles that include universality, non-discrimination and equality, participation of those living in poverty, accountability and working together. This is done by consulting people with lived experience of poverty in the development and implementation of the Strategy, establishing measurable targets and timelines, ensuring accountability through an independent National Advisory Council on Poverty and proposing legislation to ensure poverty reduction remains a priority well into the future.

The Path Forward

Opportunity for All will help reduce poverty, support Canadians working hard to join the middle class and build a diverse, prosperous and truly inclusive country—a country where all Canadians can realize their full potential.

The Strategy is guided by an understanding of the complex nature of poverty, recognizing that, for many reasons, some groups of Canadians are more at risk of poverty. The Strategy aims to remove barriers that prevent these groups from moving up, so they can be at their best. In particular, these groups include Indigenous peoples, singles aged 45-64, Canadians with disabilities, single parents (most of whom are women), seniors, recent immigrants, Black Canadians and individuals from other racialized communities, LGBTQ2 (in particular transgender individuals) and Canadians with significant health issues.

The Strategy also ensures that actions taken by the Government will be meaningful to Canadians based on what they have told us is important, measurable so that we will know if we are making progress and monitored so that the Government is held accountable for its commitment to reducing poverty. With measurable indicators and meaningful targets that will serve to monitor progress, the Strategy will guide Canada towards our vision of a country without poverty.

> *Poverty is:*
> *The condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society.*

OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL
CANADA'S FIRST POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

CANADA'S OFFICIAL POVERTY LINE

- The first official poverty line in Canada's history

TARGETS

- Reduce poverty by 20% by 2020 and by 50% by 2030, as measured by Canada's Official Poverty Line
- Reduce chronic homelessness by 50%
- End all long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on reserve by March 2021
- Housing need reduced or eliminated for 530,000 households

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON POVERTY

- Track and publicly report on progress, provide advice and continue dialogue with Canadians

MEASUREMENT AND TRACKING PROGRESS

- Improve understanding of poverty by regularly updating Canada's Official Poverty Line, addressing data gaps and tracking progress through an indicator dashboard

POVERTY REDUCTION LEGISLATION

- Propose to legislate the vision, targets, Canada's Official Poverty Line as the official measure of poverty and accountability mechanisms

PILLARS

DIGNITY

Lift Canadians out of poverty by ensuring basic needs are met

OPPORTUNITY and INCLUSION

Help Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity

RESILIENCE and SECURITY

Support the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience

Government investments that support poverty reduction

A COURSE OF ACTION THAT IS meaningful, measurable and monitored

THE JOURNEY TO **Opportunity for All**

Engaging with Canadians

IN PERSON

Over **600 Canadians** consulted through **33 conversations** in **9 different** provinces and territories

Over **5,500 Canadians** reached through the **Tackling Poverty Together Project**

13 sessions led by Government of Canada officials in collaboration with provinces, territories, Indigenous groups or organizations

29 meetings with multiple levels of government, including Canadian municipalities

12 roundtables with stakeholders

4 public town hall events

4 roundtables with Indigenous Leadership

The **Ministerial Advisory Committee** on Poverty brought together a diverse group of 17 leaders, academic experts and practitioners working in the field of poverty reduction, and individuals who have experienced poverty first hand.

The Committee provided advice to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development on a range of poverty-related issues.

National Poverty Conference
(September 27-28, 2017)

Release of the What We Heard Report
(February 20, 2018)

ONLINE

1,127 EMAIL SUBMISSIONS

584 COMPLETED SURVEYS

199 STORIES & COMMENTS

Youth Contest
#ReducePoverty
in Canada

X 64 YOUTH SUBMISSIONS

CHAPTER 2:
TAKING STOCK OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Government is focused on growth that benefits everyone, and on investments that help grow the middle class and reduce poverty. Some of these investments, like the Canada Child Benefit and the increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement, are having immediate impacts on reducing poverty and making a difference in the lives of Canadians. Other actions by the Government, such as historic investments in Early Learning and Child Care, the National Housing Strategy, public transit infrastructure, and home care and mental health, are laying the foundation for changing the lives of Canadians in the years to come.

Key New Investments to Help Lift Canadians out of Poverty and Support the Middle Class, Budget 2016, Budget 2017, and Budget 2018

Initiative	Projected New Investment
Canada Child Benefit	Budget 2016 introduced the Canada Child Benefit, which represents new investments of over $25 billion over five years, including the value of indexing the benefit beginning in 2018–19.
Guaranteed Income Supplement	Budget 2016 increased the Guaranteed Income Supplement top-up for single seniors with new investments of over $7 billion over ten years.
National Housing Strategy	Budget 2017 introduced a National Housing Strategy. The 10-year, $40-billion plan will give more Canadians a place to call home and includes $16.1 billion in federal investments in provincial and territorial housing programs, including $2.1 billion for Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy.
Indigenous Housing	Through investments made in Budget 2017 and Budget 2018, the Government announced dedicated funding of over $1.7 billion for Indigenous housing, including: • $600 million over three years to support housing on reserve as part of a 10-year First Nations Housing Strategy; • $240 million over 10 years as announced in Budget 2017 to support housing in Nunavut; • $400 million over 10 years to support an Inuit-led housing plan in the Inuit regions of Nunavik, Nunatsiavut and Inuvialuit; and • $500 million over 10 years to support the Métis Nation's housing strategy.
Public Transit Infrastructure	Budget 2016 announced $3.4 billion over three years to upgrade and improve public transit systems across Canada. Budget 2017 announced an additional $20.1 billion over 11 years in public transit infrastructure to transform the way that Canadians live, move and work. A further $5.0 billion was announced in Budget 2017 for public transit projects that will be funded through the Canada Infrastructure Bank.
Early Learning and Child Care	Budgets 2016 and 2017 announced combined investments of $7.5 billion over 11 years to improve the affordability, quality and accessibility of Early Learning and Child Care, including for Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care.
Labour Market Transfer Agreements	Budget 2017 provided additional investments of $2.7 billion over six years through agreements with provinces and territories to help Canadians prepare for, find, advance in and keep good jobs.
Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program	Budget 2018 introduced the new Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program to replace the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy with an incremental investment of almost $450 million over five years and nearly $100 million per year ongoing.
Canada Workers Benefit	Budget 2018 introduced the new Canada Workers Benefit to strengthen and replace the Working Income Tax Benefit with new investments of $3 billion over five years, which includes measures to improve access to the Benefit.
Home Care and Mental Health	Budget 2017 provided $11 billion over 10 years to support better home care mental health initiatives through agreements with provinces and territories.

This government has made – and continues to make – significant investments in support of poverty reduction. This year, the Government is projected to invest nearly $10 billion in new spending in support of poverty reduction, including investments through the Canada Child Benefit, the increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement, and the National Housing Strategy. This builds on new investments in poverty reduction this government has already made totalling $5 billion in 2016-17 and nearly $7.5 billion in 2017-18. Total investments over the 2016–17 to 2018–19 period are $22 billion, and the Government has also committed new investments of over $12 billion for 2019–20.

Increases in child benefits provide a larger source of income for families with children.

In the 2016–17 benefit year, over 3.3 million families received more than $23 billion in Canada Child Benefit payments, and the 9 out of 10 families who are better off as a result of the Benefit received on average almost $2,300 more in benefits, tax-free, than under the previous system of child benefits.

Dignity

The first pillar of *Opportunity for All* is making sure that Canadians have the basic necessities to live life with dignity. We have made significant and immediate investments in this pillar, especially for children, seniors and lower-wage workers.

Lifting children out of poverty is a top priority. Evidence shows that children who grow up in poverty are more likely to remain poor as they age. Recognizing this, the Government has bolstered benefits to families with children through the new, more generous, tax-free **Canada Child Benefit**. The Canada Child Benefit is helping lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty, and has improved the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of additional children and families.

As of July 20, 2018, the Canada Child Benefit is indexed to inflation to ensure that the Benefit keeps pace with the cost of living and continues to help Canadian families over the long term. For a single parent of two children earning $35,000 per year, a strengthened Canada Child Benefit will contribute an additional $560 in the 2019–20 benefit year towards the cost of raising their children.

In 2016, Canada Child Benefit take up for First Nations people living on reserve was nearly 80%, compared to over 95% for Canada.

To address this gap, the Government is improving access to the Canada Child Benefit and other benefits through tailored, in-person service support for Indigenous peoples—in particular in remote and northern communities where there are distinct barriers to accessing federal benefits.

The
CANADA CHILD BENEFIT
is making a difference in the lives of Canadians
For the
2016–2017 benefit year
Single mothers earning less than $60,000/year
received about
$9,000
in benefit payments on average
making it easier for them to afford the things that give children a good quality of life such as
A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE
HEALTHY FOOD
WINTER CLOTHING
9 out of 10 families
are receiving more in child benefits than under the previous system of child benefits

Extra support at this crucial stage of life helps children and families meet their basic needs. It also helps low- and modest-income families join the middle class, and helps keep middle-class families out of poverty should they face a setback.

It is equally important for Canada's seniors to be able to rely on a strong support system in their retirement after many years of hard work. The introduction of the Old Age Security pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement in 1967 significantly reduced poverty amongst seniors, and the Government has continued to strengthen it. Restoring the age of eligibility from 67 to 65 for the **Old Age Security pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement** has helped 100,000 seniors aged 65 and 66 avoid plunging into severe poverty each year. To help seniors who are living in poverty or are most at risk of living in poverty, most of whom are women, the Government also increased the Guaranteed Income Supplement for the lowest-income single seniors. This increase of up to $947 annually is helping improve the financial security of 900,000 seniors, and is lifting 57,000 seniors out of poverty. This measure represents an investment of over $670 million per year.

The Government also continues to make improvements in the delivery of Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement so that more seniors get the benefits to which they are entitled. This includes automatically enrolling many new beneficiaries, simplifying the application form and actively reaching out to ensure that qualified seniors receive their benefits. These and other actions have resulted in more than 95,000 additional seniors receiving or about to receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement. This is an added boost for low-income seniors who need the support the most.

Beyond benefits for Canada's seniors, the Government is also working to ensure that Canadians, and particularly those in lower income, are able to access the benefits to which they are entitled. Through the **Community Volunteer Income Tax Program**, community organizations host free tax preparation clinics to help individuals access the benefits and credits to which they are entitled, including the Canada Child Benefit. In Budget 2018, the Government doubled the size of the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program to a total annual ongoing investment of $13 million, beginning in 2018–19. This investment will also complement the work the Government is undertaking to increase take-up of the Canada Child Benefit among Indigenous peoples.

Poverty Reduction Impact of Key Government Initiatives

Initiative	Children Lifted out of Poverty (LICO) (% reduction)	Persons Lifted out of Poverty (LICO) (% reduction)	Children Lifted out of Poverty (Canada's Official Poverty Line) (% reduction)	Persons Lifted out of Poverty (Canada's Official Poverty Line) (% reduction)
Canada Child Benefit (2016)	293,000 39.2%	497,000 14.8%	281,000 28.9%	521,000 12.5%
Guaranteed Income Supplement (2016)	Not Applicable*	13,000 0.4%	Not Applicable*	57,000 1.3%
Canada Workers Benefit (2019)	Not Applicable**	Not Applicable**	21,000 2.3%	74,000 1.7%
Total Lifted Out of Poverty	**293,000**	**510,000**	**302,000**	**652,000**

Note: In general, these poverty reduction impacts do not include populations in Canada's territories and First Nations people living on reserve. One exception, however, is the LICO (Low Income Cut-offs) estimate of poverty reduction impacts of the Canada Child Benefit. Because of statistical modeling limitations, the Government has been using LICO to measure poverty reduction impacts. More recently, the Government has used Canada's Official Poverty Line to measure poverty reduction impacts, such as the impact of the new Canada Workers Benefit. Going forward, the Government intends to use Canada's Official Poverty Line, consistent with the overall plan in *Opportunity for All*, to measure poverty reduction impacts.
*The Guaranteed Income Supplement is for seniors, and the increase to the benefit's top-up was targeted to single seniors.
** LICO impacts of the Canada Workers Benefit would not take into account the increase to Canada Pension Plan contributions that would take place concurrently to the increase to the Canada Workers Benefit. This is due to the fact that payroll taxes are not subtracted from total income to calculate after-tax income (the income concept used for LICO). Therefore, the poverty reduction impacts calculated using the LICO would not be representative of the true effects of the Canada Workers Benefit on individual incomes.

> *"While poverty is not always about homelessness, homelessness is always about poverty."*
>
> – Submission to the *Poverty Reduction Strategy* online consultations

The Government is also making historic, long-term investment in Canada's first-ever **National Housing Strategy**, because every Canadian should have a place to call home. With investments of $40 billion over 10 years in housing, the Strategy will help provide Canadians with accessible, affordable housing that meets their needs. Over the next decade, these historic investments in housing aim to reduce or eliminate more than 530,000 families from housing need, protect 385,000 community homes and create another 50,000 units through the expansion of community housing in Canada. The Strategy aims to meet the needs of diverse Canadians, including seniors, Indigenous peoples, survivors of family violence, people with disabilities, refugees, veterans and those grappling with homelessness. The Strategy also commits to ensuring that at least 33 percent of funds go to projects for women, girls and their families, recognizing the unique vulnerabilities women face in housing. In addition, the Government will support the successful implementation of **housing strategies for First Nations, Inuit and Métis**.

As part of the National Housing Strategy, the Government announced a total investment of $2.1 billion over 10 years to tackle homelessness through an expanded federal homelessness program. A redesigned federal homelessness program, ***Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy***, will officially launch on April 1, 2019. The program will bolster community efforts to tackle homelessness, including adopting an outcomes-based approach and enabling communities to gather more comprehensive data on local homeless populations. Together with other National Housing Strategy initiatives, this modernized federal homelessness program aims to reduce chronic homelessness by 50 percent over the next 10 years.

Public infrastructure is crucial in helping Canadians both meet their basic needs and have the opportunity to succeed. That is why the Government has invested in infrastructure that will not just benefit Canadians for years to come, but will also create quality jobs to help Canadians support their families and join the middle class. Investments in **public transit** will help lower-income Canadians more efficiently and safely navigate busy lives, from getting to work, to bringing a family member to a doctor's appointment, to getting kids to school on time. These investments go beyond just helping Canadians make ends meet; they are helping families spend less time *travelling* to jobs and school, and more time *succeeding* in work and education, and being with family members and friends.

The Government's infrastructure investments also support **community and cultural spaces**. Public spaces like community centres, parks and libraries can be a valued resource in the lives of lower-income Canadians. Community centres and parks are meeting places where children can play and build friendships that last a lifetime. Libraries offer a breadth of resources to help parents find books to read to their children, apply for jobs and attend information sessions on a variety of topics such as training and nutrition.

Opportunity and Inclusion

Tackling poverty means more than providing the bare necessities. It also means promoting opportunity and removing discriminatory barriers based on gender, race, ability, sexual orientation or gender identity and expression that prevent people from getting ahead. The second pillar of *Opportunity for All* is about helping more Canadians join the middle class by giving every Canadian a fair and real chance to succeed.

For far too long, Indigenous peoples have been held back from reaching their full potential. Generations of Indigenous peoples have suffered from the neglect and failed policies of the federal government. First Nations, Inuit and Métis do not enjoy the same opportunities as other Canadians. It is for these reasons that one of the Government's priorities is to renew the relationship with Indigenous peoples by making real progress on the issues most important to them.

The Government of Canada is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and to a renewed relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership. No relationship is more important to the Government of Canada than its relationship with Indigenous peoples. As part of its commitment to reconciliation, the Government is working to improve the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous peoples and their communities and bring about transformational change. Since 2015, the Government has invested billions of dollars in health, education, infrastructure, training and other programs that will directly contribute to a better quality of life for Indigenous peoples and a stronger Canada.

As one example, the Government is working with Indigenous partners to design an **Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework**—one that reflects the unique cultures and needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children.

Accessible, inclusive, high-quality early learning and child care is critical to giving children the best start in life. The Government has made historical investments of $7.5 billion over 11 years to provide **quality, affordable child care** across the country. By 2020, up to approximately 40,000 children may benefit from quality new subsidized child care spaces across Canada. This will support parents in the hard work they do for their families by giving them peace of mind with the knowledge that their children are getting the care they need and deserve.

Early years support helps set children on a path to accomplishments in primary and secondary school. And while Canadians know that quality education gives them the tools they need to succeed, many Canadians face multiple challenges that make it difficult to get ahead. Adults may need to re-train for a better job, but post-secondary education may be unaffordable and out of reach. Youth may struggle to complete high school for a variety of reasons, such as having to balance school with a part-time job, or not having a home environment that helps them focus on their studies.

These barriers to post-secondary education hold Canadians back from joining the middle class. To help make college and university more affordable, the Government has increased **Canada Student Grants** from $2,000 to $3,000 per year for students from lower-income families, from $800 to $1,200 per year for students from middle-income families, and from $1,200 to $1,800 per year for part-time students from lower-income families. This increase is putting more money in the pockets of more than 360,000 full-time and part-time students each year.

The Government has also simplified the **Canada Student Loans Program** application process and increased the loan repayment threshold by approximately 23 percent, so that students do not have to repay their loans until they are earning at least $25,000 per year. This increased threshold helps to ease students' transition into the workforce.

In addition, through the new **Skills Boost** pilot initiative, beginning in fall 2018, **adults returning to school on a full-time basis** after several years in the workforce will be eligible to receive an additional $1,600 in grant funding per school year, on top of the other grants and loans available to students. Skills Boost will also allow unemployed Canadians to continue receiving Employment Insurance benefits when taking self-funded training.

Pathways to Education Canada is helping youth succeed

Established in 2001, Pathways to Education Canada works with local partners to provide youth from lower-income neighbourhoods with the academic, social and financial supports they need to complete high school. Launched as a pilot project in the Regent Park area of Toronto, the Pathways program has since expanded to 18 communities across Canada.

The Pathways program has proven to be very successful. On average, high school graduation rates increased by 85 percent in communities offering the Pathways program. Between 2004 and 2015, more than 4,000 Pathways students successfully graduated from high school; nearly three-quarters of these graduates have gone on to pursue post-secondary education or training, further improving their prospects for finding good, well-paying jobs.

In Budget 2017, the Government announced renewed support for Pathways to Education Canada by providing $38 million over four years, starting in 2018–19.

Educational supports for youth and adults help open the gateway into the workplace. As the job market increasingly places a premium on a diverse skill set, Canadians may need to upgrade their skills throughout their careers. On top of the nearly $3 billion per year in current transfers to provinces and territories in support of **skills training and employment programs**, the Government is ramping up funding to an additional 21 percent by 2021–22. Transfers have also been made simpler, more flexible and more responsive to the needs of employers and workers, including those currently under-represented in the workforce. Taken together, this funding is helping individuals across all age groups and backgrounds—from youth to more experienced workers, newcomers to Canada, and persons with disabilities and others—so that all Canadians have the opportunity to find and keep quality jobs.

While women's participation in the workplace has increased over the past few decades, there are still less women employed (58 percent) than men (65 percent). Women who do work are typically paid less than men for similar work. To address the gender wage gap, the Government will be introducing historic **pay equity legislation** to ensure that women receive equal pay for work of

equal value in federally regulated industries. In addition, the Government will implement **pay transparency** to, in particular, make existing wage gaps more evident in federally regulated industries. This will help to highlight employers who lead in equitable pay practices, while holding employers accountable for wage gaps that affect women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and individuals from racialized communities.

The Government is also taking steps to increase representation of women in male-dominated sectors of the economy, so they too can benefit from good, well-paying jobs. For example, the Government is investing in an **Apprenticeship Incentive Grant for Women** to encourage women to pursue careers in male-dominated—and better paid—trades, and to ensure that women are increasingly able to model leadership to other aspiring female tradespeople. The Government is also investing in research and data collection to fill important gaps in knowledge as to how to achieve **greater diversity and inclusion within the high-paying jobs of tomorrow**. One of the first projects the Government will support is an analysis of the unique challenges visible minority and newcomer women face in finding employment in science, technology engineering and mathematics occupations.

These measures are just a sample of the steps that the Government is taking to reduce gender gaps in education, skills training and employment so all Canadians can have equal opportunity to succeed.

Indigenous peoples are less likely to be employed than non-Indigenous Canadians, and for those who do work, they typically earn less. The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy has existed for many years, but funding levels have not kept up with population growth and needs. The Government recognized that more needs to be done to help close the employment and earnings gap between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians. The new **Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program** increases funding by 34 percent compared to the previous program, which will help more Indigenous people gain skills and find jobs to support themselves and their families. The new Program also recognizes the unique needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis by establishing distinct programmatic and funding streams.

In addition, to ensure that Indigenous students have the same opportunities for success as other Canadian students, in 2017 the Government increased the funding for the **Post-Secondary Student Support Program** by $90 million over two years. This funding increase will support the post-secondary education and financial needs of more than 4,600 First Nations and Inuit students enrolled in qualifying post-secondary programs.

Newcomers to Canada also face unique barriers to participating fully in their new country, including their ability to enter the workforce. When newcomers are unemployed, or in jobs below their skill level, they can struggle financially and socially, and our economy loses out. To help remove these barriers, the Government is working with provinces and territories to support newcomers' employability, assist Canadian employers to fully benefit from the contribution of newcomers, and streamline and improve **foreign qualification recognition**.

> *"I'm from Syria. My husband can't find work. He is a mechanic; he worked as a mechanic for 12 years in Syria. It is more of a hands-on job, but when he applies he is told that he needs a Canadian certificate. I worked for 13 years repairing eyeglasses, and I wish I could do that job here."*
>
> – Newcomer from Saint John, New Brunswick, *Tackling Poverty Together* Project

In addition, in 2017, the Government launched the **Targeted Employment Strategy for Newcomers** to help newcomers find jobs that suit their skills and experience. This includes the **Foreign Credential Recognition Loans Program**, which provides newcomers with loans to help cover credential recognition costs, such as licensing exams. A new three-year **Visible Minority Newcomer Women Pilot** is beginning in 2018–19 to support programming for newcomer women who are also members of racialized communities.

The Government's plan for reducing poverty must also address systemic barriers such as racism and discrimination that hold some Canadians back. It is unacceptable that any Canadian should face these barriers, and the Government strongly believes that all Canadians should be treated equally and with respect.

In November 2016, the Government appointed a **special advisor on LGBTQ2 issues**. This advisor is working with LGBTQ2 organizations from across the country to protect the rights of their members, and address discrimination against them—both historic and current. This builds on historic legislation (Bill C-16 passed into law in June 2017) which recognized and reduced the vulnerability of transgender and other gender-diverse persons to discrimination, hate propaganda and hate crimes, and to affirm their equal status in Canadian society.

To help address systemic barriers of racism, the Government will launch cross-country consultations on a new **national anti-racism approach**. The plan will bring together experts, community organizations, citizens and interfaith leaders to find new ways to collaborate and combat discrimination, and will increase funds to address racism and discrimination targeted against Indigenous peoples, as well as Indigenous and racialized women and girls.

In particular, as a first step toward recognizing the significant and unique challenges faced by Black Canadians, the Government will also fund local community supports for at-risk youth, and develop research in support of more culturally focused mental health programs in the Black Canadian community.

The Government is also focused on removing barriers to inclusion for persons with disabilities. Canadians living with disabilities deserve a better chance to succeed in their local communities and workplaces. In June 2018, the Government introduced the **Accessible Canada Act** in Parliament with the objective to promote equality of opportunity by helping remove barriers and prevent new barriers from being created for persons with disabilities in the federal jurisdiction.

Every Canadian should have a fair and equal chance to succeed. Whether a teenager is moving from high school to post-secondary education, or an adult is looking to improve their skills for the next job, or a parent is re-entering the workforce after caregiving leave, or an individual faces discrimination because of their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or the colour of their skin, these measures are helping remove barriers and level the playing field so that all Canadians can reach their full potential.

Resilience and Security

The third pillar of *Opportunity for All* is about enhancing income security supports to promote Canadians' capacity to handle life's risks and challenges and develop confidence in the future, while preventing them from falling into poverty by helping them through difficult times.

Canadians who face setbacks or are taking time to care for their families can get the help they need from temporary income support through Employment Insurance (EI). The Government has made a series of EI changes to make the system more flexible, so that people **receive their benefits sooner**, eligible **caregivers can receive a new EI benefit** when temporarily taking time away from work to care for critically ill or injured family members, **youth and newcomers to Canada have better access to EI benefits** and people who accept some work while receiving EI can **keep some of their benefits**.

In situations where certain regions or industries are facing hard times—for example, during the downturn of the oil industry in 2015 or the softwood lumber tariffs in 2017—the Government has expanded the flexibility of EI benefits to prevent Canadians from falling into poverty. The Government has also extended support to **seasonal workers** who exhaust their EI benefits, and has announced that it will increase the maximum EI benefit payment duration from four weeks to seven weeks for **workers who are owed wages**, vacation, severance or termination pay when their employer files for bankruptcy or enters receivership.

Canada is a country where everyone has a fair and equal chance at success. This means that parents should have the supports they need to balance family and work responsibilities, and be resilient through life changes. That is why the Government proposed a new EI Parental Sharing benefit to promote **more equal distribution of family responsibilities between spouses**.

Some Canadians struggle more than others, even with a job. There are over 1 million Canadians who are working hard but are still living in poverty. Thanks to the **Canada Workers Benefit**, beginning in 2019, these lower-income Canadians will get an added financial boost to the money they take home from work. The Government will also make it easier to get the Canada Workers Benefit by ensuring that every worker who qualifies is automatically enrolled in the benefit without having to apply—a major step in fulfilling the Government's commitment of making sure that all Canadians receive the tax benefits and credits to which they are entitled. In addition, the Government is also working to improve the delivery of the Canada Workers Benefit to provide better support to lower-income Canadians throughout the year, rather than through an annual refund when they file their taxes.

The Canada Workers Benefit will help Canadians who work but still struggle

Because of the Canada Workers Benefit, a lower-income worker earning $15,000 a year could receive up to nearly $500 more from the program in 2019 than they received in 2018. That is as much as $1,100 to handle unexpected costs and help plan for the future. Overall, the introduction of the Canada Workers Benefit will lift approximately 70,000 Canadians out of poverty.

Getting a job is important, but working conditions for employees are equally important. The Government is demonstrating leadership through the ***Canada Labour Code*** to give workers in federally regulated private sectors improved work-life balance, such as the right to request **flexible work arrangements** from their employer. This added flexibility will help workers better manage work, family and personal responsibilities, which can always be a challenge in the busy lives of Canadians. A broader review of Part III (Federal Labour Standards) of the *Canada Labour Code* will ensure that Canadians can continue to benefit from a robust set of federal labour standards that respond to the realities of today's workplaces and set the stage for good-quality jobs. As a part of this review, between May 2017 and March 2018, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour held consultations with Canadians, unions and labour organizations, employers and employer organizations, academics, other experts and advocacy groups to get their perspectives on what a robust and modern set of federal labour standards should look like.

The Government has also taken steps to help Canadians be more resilient in retirement. Specifically, the Government reached a historic agreement with provinces to **enhance the Canada Pension Plan** (CPP) to help Canadians achieve safe, secure and dignified retirements. The CPP enhancement will increase the maximum CPP retirement benefit by 50 percent over time (from over $13,000 per year to nearly $21,000 per year if it was in place today). The increase is based on higher CPP replacement earnings in retirement and increasing the range of earnings covered by the CPP. The CPP enhancement will also include an increase to the maximum disability benefit. The enhanced CPP will continue to be indexed annually to keep up with the cost of living, and will be fully portable across jobs and provinces. It will provide financial stability so Canadians can worry less about outliving their savings in retirement.

Nothing is more important to us than our health. An unexpected illness or the onset of a disability or chronic health condition—even an accident—can devastate a family who may have been doing well until then. Illness can result in individuals no longer being able to work through no fault of their own. To aggravate the matter, there may be high costs for prescription drugs or other treatments, as well as transportation costs for getting to appointments.

Canadians can be rightfully proud of having a universal health care system that helps guard against these risks and impacts. The Government has taken leadership in engaging with provinces and territories to address key health care priorities and keep our health care system strong. In particular, this includes investments of $11 billion over 10 years to provinces and territories specifically targeted to improve **home care and mental health services**. The Government has also allocated $544 million over five years to federal and pan-Canadian health organizations to support health innovation and pharmaceutical initiatives.

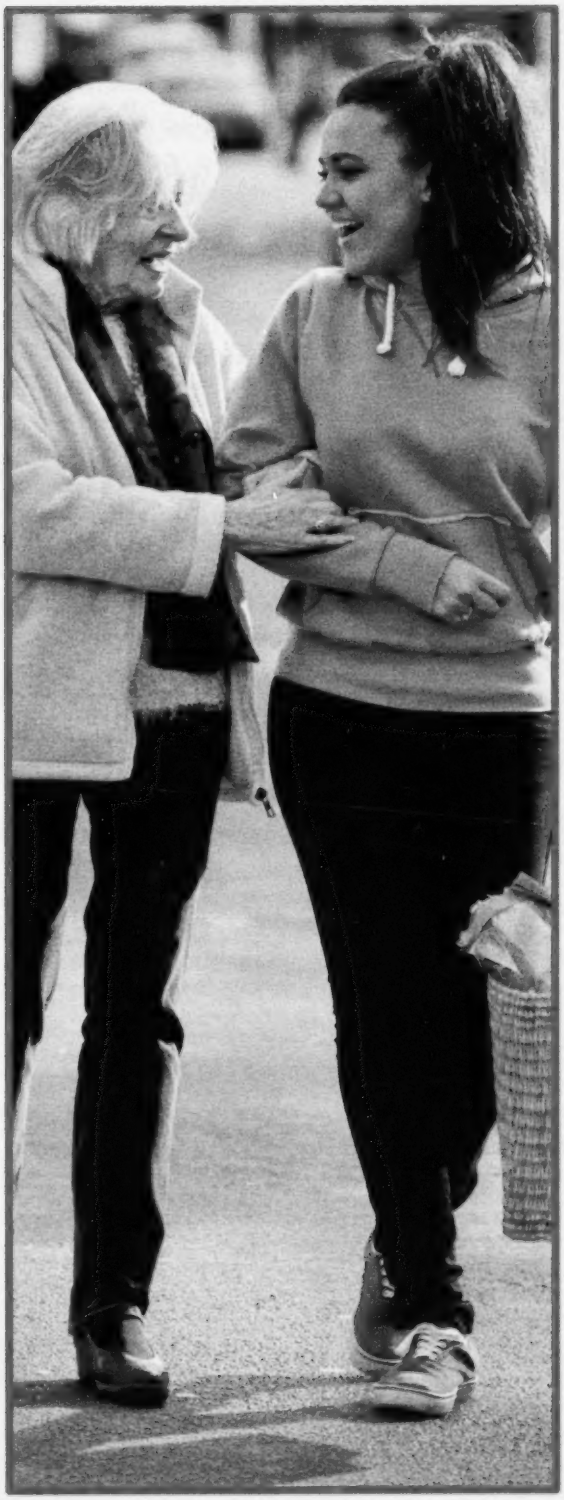
Beyond these measures, the Government is taking action to address the serious impacts that the **opioid crisis** is having on communities across Canada. This public health crisis affects people of all ages and backgrounds, in all regions of the country, from inner cities, to the suburbs, to rural and remote communities and Indigenous communities. Opioid-related overdoses and deaths are devastating communities. Investments of $231.4 million over five years beginning in 2018–19 will improve access to evidence-based treatment services for those in need.

Taken together, the Government has made these investments because it recognizes how crucial it is for Canadians to know that we have supports there when we need them so that we can all bounce back.

Investing in the Social and Economic Fabric of Canada

All of these initiatives will reduce poverty—and they are just a sample of the many measures that the Government has taken to improve Canada's social infrastructure so that all Canadians have the social and economic supports needed to thrive as part of the middle class.

To learn more about these investments, please refer to Annex 2: Government Initiatives that Support Poverty Reduction at the end of this document. These measures are there for Canadians because we are all better off when no one is left behind, and all Canadians should be able share in our collective prosperity.



CHAPTER 3: DIGNITY

There are some things that no Canadian should go without, and some choices that should not have to be made. Everyone should have a nutritious and healthy diet, accessible and affordable housing, essential health care needs met, and enough money to avoid making hard choices between these and other things that are an essential part of life in their communities—between paying the rent and feeding the kids, between filling a prescription and keeping the heat on in the winter.

The first pillar of *Opportunity for All* gives priority to those most in need, and seeks to eliminate deprivation of basic necessities. Research and experience tell us that poverty in these basic necessities is not only about money but also about access to suitable housing, healthy and nutritious food, and health care, and it requires action from communities, local governments, and provincial and territorial authorities.

Measuring Progress in Helping Canadians Meet Their Basic Needs

In addition to measuring poverty using Canada's Official Poverty Line, *Opportunity for All* will track, as part of a dashboard of indicators, four elements that all Canadians need, regardless of where they live: food, housing and shelter, health care and a basic level of income. Statistics Canada surveys and other sources will be used to guide and monitor progress in helping Canadians meet their basic needs.

Progress will be achieved if more Canadians are able to afford healthy and nutritious food, and live in housing that is in good condition and of suitable size for their families, and if the number of Canadians who are chronically homeless decreases. Progress will also mean that more Canadians are able to receive health care when they need it. Finally, progress will mean that the income of the poorest of the poor has also risen, so that more Canadians are closer to meeting their basic needs and the modest standard of living reflected in Canada's Official Poverty Line.

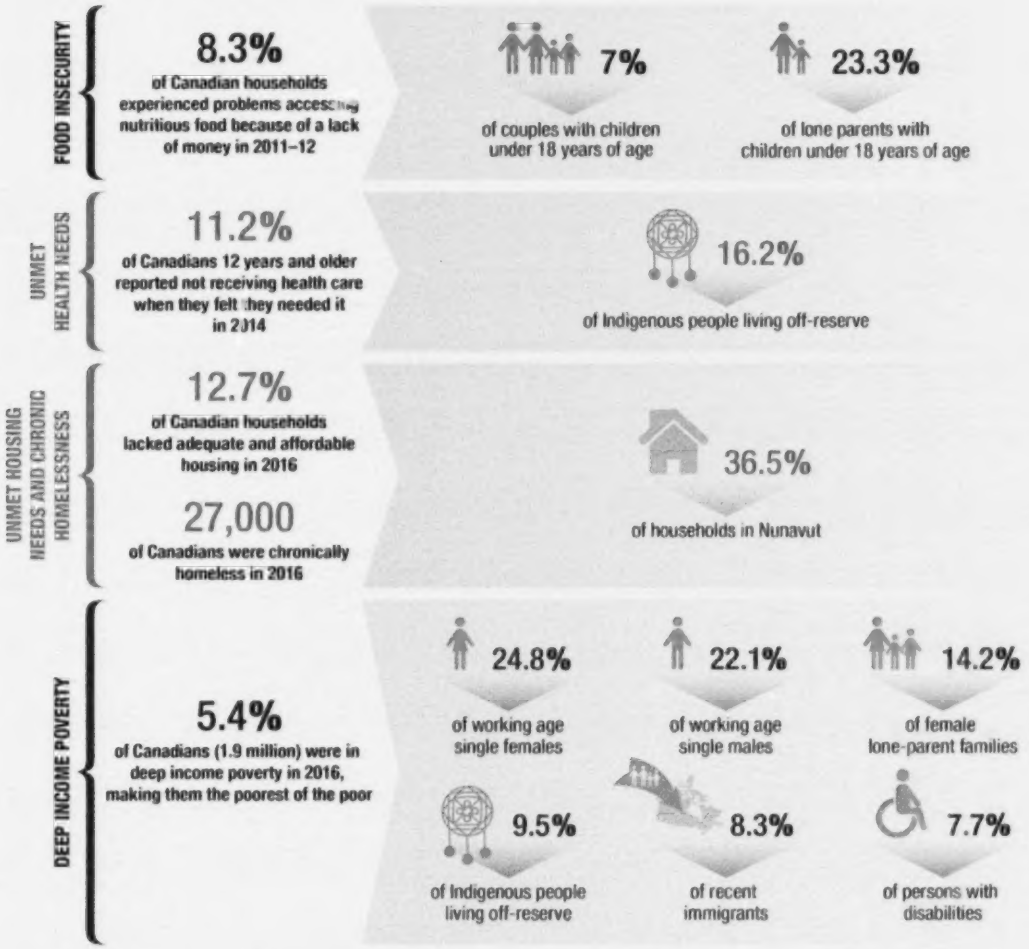
> *"There is just not enough money and my bills equal more than my income. It causes tough choices. You want to buy things for your kids but rent takes priority."*
>
> *– Person with a lived experience of poverty, Saint John, New Brunswick,* Tackling Poverty Together Project

These indicators will allow all Canadians to monitor how well we are doing at working together to reduce poverty. These indicators will be detailed enough to track progress not just at the national level, but also at the provincial and territorial level, and for various groups of Canadians defined by gender, age, family composition, Indigenous identity, disability status, and other personal and social characteristics. For example, the indicators could be used to track progress for Black Canadians and other racialized communities, as well as for other groups.

> *"There is a perception of what you can't have if you are poor; that dehumanizes people."*
>
> – Participant from Kitchener, Ontario, in the Tamarack Community Conversations as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy consultations

DIGNITY

Lift Canadians out of poverty by ensuring basic needs are met


FOOD INSECURITY
8.3%
of Canadian households experienced problems accessing nutritious food because of a lack of money in 2011–12
7%
of couples with children under 18 years of age
23.3%
of lone parents with children under 18 years of age
UNMET HEALTH NEEDS
11.2%
of Canadians 12 years and older reported not receiving health care when they felt they needed it in 2014
16.2%
of Indigenous people living off-reserve
UNMET HOUSING NEEDS AND CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS
12.7%
of Canadian households lacked adequate and affordable housing in 2016
27,000
of Canadians were chronically homeless in 2016
36.5%
of households in Nunavut
DEEP INCOME POVERTY
5.4%
of Canadians (1.9 million) were in deep income poverty in 2016, making them the poorest of the poor
24.8%
of working age single females
22.1%
of working age single males
14.2%
of female lone-parent families
9.5%
of Indigenous people living off-reserve
8.3%
of recent immigrants
7.7%
of persons with disabilities

Statistics for each indicator are based on most recent available data. Going forward, *Opportunity for All* will track progress relative to 2015 levels or available data that is closest in time to 2015. Further details on poverty reduction indicators are available in Annex 1 – The Statistical Fine Print. Canadians in deep income poverty have income that is below 75% of Canada's Official Poverty Line. Working age refers to individuals who are 18–64 years of age.

CHAPTER 4:
OPPORTUNITY AND INCLUSION

Addressing poverty is about more than just providing the bare necessities of life. Many Canadians struggle to get ahead because of barriers beyond their control, such as discrimination or unacceptable prejudices. For example, Black Canadians and people from other racialized communities can face discrimination that prevents them from getting a good job despite being qualified, or from advancing in their career. Discrimination based on skin colour can also lead to social exclusion, whether in the workplace or in the community.

Indigenous peoples often face long-standing challenges rooted in Canada's colonial history, which has marginalized generations and led to poverty. Discrimination can also be based on other factors, such as a person's sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. As well, persons with disabilities do not have the same level of opportunity and inclusion as other Canadians when physical spaces are simply not accessible to them. Newcomers to Canada often face multiple challenges, such as learning a new language and finding work, as they try to advance. Challenges can be particularly severe when these attributes intersect: for example, for a Black Canadian woman with a disability.

Accordingly, a fundamental part of addressing poverty is to promote community and opportunity, and to remove discrimination based on gender, race, disabilities, sexual orientation or other grounds, and other roadblocks that prevent people from getting ahead.

The second pillar of *Opportunity for All* is aligned with the right to equality and non-discrimination under domestic law. This pillar is about fostering

opportunity and movement out of poverty so that more Canadians can join the middle class and fully participate in their communities. It is about making it easier for Canadians to move up the income ladder, climb out of poverty and feel empowered through self-sufficiency.

> *"Once you're stuck below the poverty line, it is so hard to get above it."*
>
> – Person with a lived experience of poverty, Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Tackling Poverty Together Project

Promoting opportunity means removing barriers and helping all Canadians excel through access to life-long education and skills development, which lead to quality jobs. These essential skills include literacy and numeracy among all Canadians, but particularly among young people, with their engagement in employment, education and training continually on the rise.

Initiatives undertaken by the Government mean Canadians will increasingly have enough income to afford not just the basic necessities, but also the other things they need to fully participate in their communities.

For many Canadians, particularly those working hard to join the middle class, this is a vision to promote engagement and social inclusion so we can thrive together, and have the support of our family, friends and everyone in our communities. Working together we can ensure that no one is left behind. This is a vision to promote full participation of all Canadians in our society.

> *"Poverty is not an equal opportunity disabler—gender, race, and other factors bear heavily and need to be acknowledged in designing responses."*
>
> – United Way Centraide Canada's submission to the Poverty Reduction Strategy consultations

Measuring Progress in Helping Canadians Join the Middle Class

Canada's Official Poverty Line is sensitive to the reality of being able to afford the necessities of life, reflecting the costs of a healthy basket of food, appropriate shelter and home maintenance, clothing and transportation. But it is also sensitive to the reality of being able to afford other things that permit full engagement in the community, such as the extra-curricular activities that round out a child's life.

However, social inclusion and equality of opportunity cannot be measured simply in dollars, as there are some necessities we all require to reach our full potential. That is why the Opportunity Pillar includes four indicators to measure the skills and level of engagement that are required to increase the odds that Canadians will lead fulfilling lives.

In a world where technology is increasingly part of all aspects of our life, more than ever, all Canadians need to be able to read, write and perform basic math to be able to participate in their communities. Young people should be actively engaged, whether in employment, education or training. Adults should be supported in pursuing life-long learning, gaining new skills and strengthening existing skills. Persons with disabilities should be able to participate in their communities.

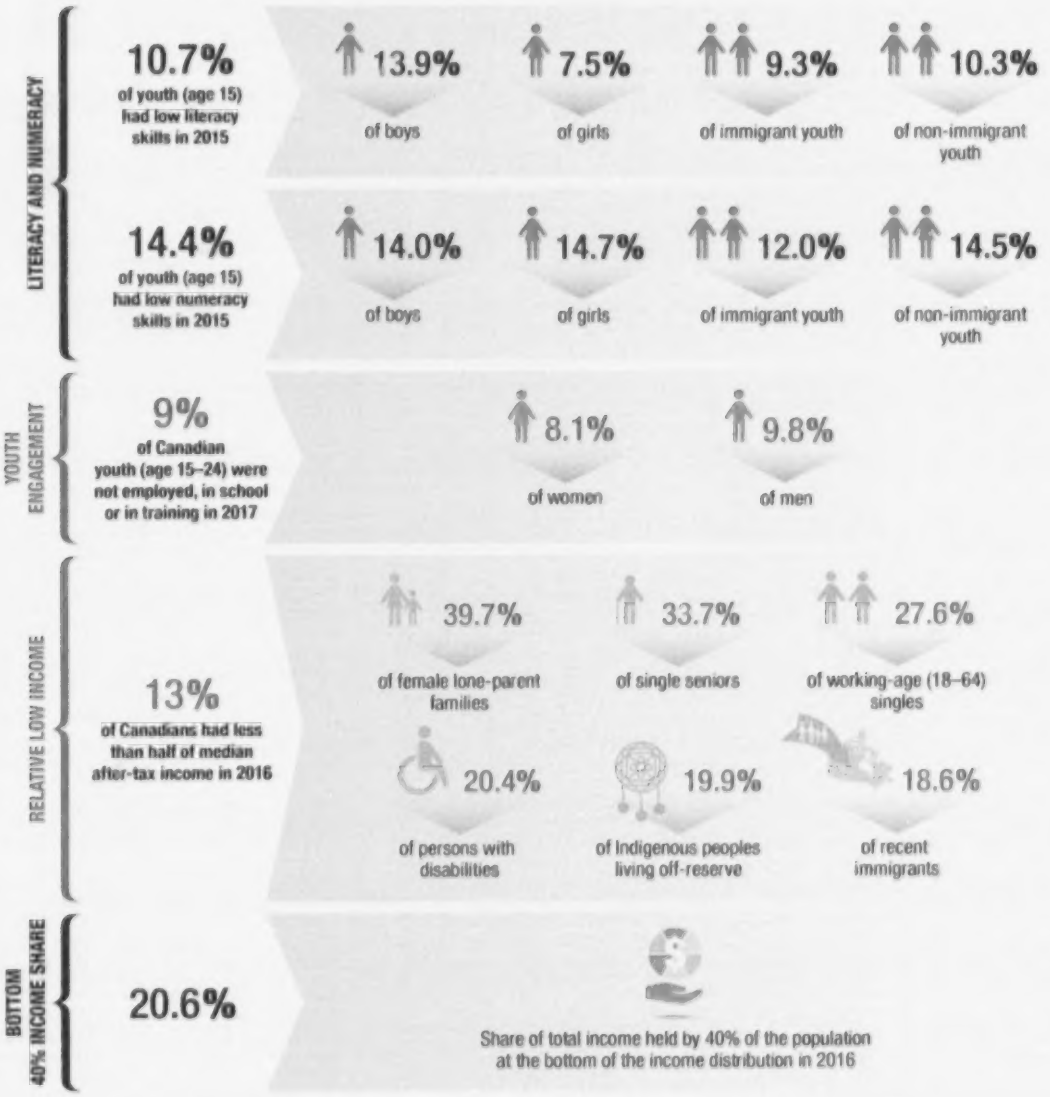
The distance between Canadians in poverty and those in the middle class, as measured by relative low income, should be reduced so that more Canadians can see getting out of poverty as a

realistic possibility. And finally, the share of total income earned by Canadians in the lower 40 percent of the income distribution should increase, which is consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of reducing inequalities within countries.

Progress on these measures will be achieved if the number of Canadians equipped with literacy and numeracy skills rises, as these basic skills are critical for having quality jobs and participating in many aspects of life. Progress will mean there are more young people in jobs, education or training, so they can share in our collective prosperity. Finally, progress will mean that the number of Canadians with less than half the income of the average Canadian decreases while the share of income earned by Canadians in the lower 40 percent of the income distribution increases, with more Canadians joining the middle class. These results would be distributed evenly, reflecting equitable opportunities and ensuring that all Canadians are able to benefit, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual identity and expression, or ability.

OPPORTUNITY and INCLUSION

Help Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity



Statistics for each indicator are based on most recent available data. Going forward, *Opportunity for All* will track progress relative to 2015 levels or available data that is closest in time to 2015. Further details on poverty reduction indicators are available in Annex 1 – The Statistical Fine Print. Relative Low Income is referred to as the Low Income Measure by Statistics Canada.

CHAPTER 5:
RESILIENCE AND SECURITY

Canadians should have the income security and social supports they need to be able to rebound from life's setbacks. Canadians have told us about their stresses when dealing with life's uncertainties. These stresses include falling ill and being unable to work; losing a good job after many years of loyal service; leaving work to care for a child with a disability or a sick parent; experiencing divorce, separation or widowhood, which have a disproportionately negative economic impact on women; or funding a secure and dignified retirement.

We all experience setbacks in life. During these difficult times, many of us can seek help from family and friends. Parents can sometimes ask their neighbours to look after their kids for the afternoon while they visit a sick relative in hospital. A brother or sister can often offer help with finding a new job. Unfortunately, not all Canadians have access to these supports when they need them. Together, we can all help each other through challenging times.

The third pillar of *Opportunity for All* is about promoting the capacity to handle life's risks and challenges, and developing confidence in the future. It is about preventing people from falling into poverty wherever they are on the income ladder, particularly those who have experienced poverty in the past and have worked hard to move up, but also those who have long been in the middle class. At its core, the best protection against poverty is having a job. However, when Canadians struggle with finding employment or cannot work due to disability or illness, we all need to step up and help.

"[Escaping poverty means] the ability to LIVE, not just survive."

"[Success in poverty reduction would mean] an increase in hopefulness and a decrease in helplessness."

– Participants from Burlington, Ontario, in the Tamarack Community Conversations as part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy consultations

Measuring Progress in Helping Canadians Remain Resilient Through Growth that Benefits Everyone

Supporting a resilient middle class requires economic growth that increases the incomes of individuals in poverty as well as the majority of the population. In this way, *Opportunity for All* is an integral part of fostering a strong middle class.

Opportunity for All will track progress on four inter-related indicators of resilience in Canadian households: the hourly wage rate earned by the average Canadian, the percentage of Canadians that fall into poverty each year as well as the percentage of Canadians that are lifted out of poverty each year, the average shortfall below the poverty line among those who are below Canada's Official Poverty Line, and the number of Canadians with sufficient savings and other assets to handle a setback without falling into poverty.

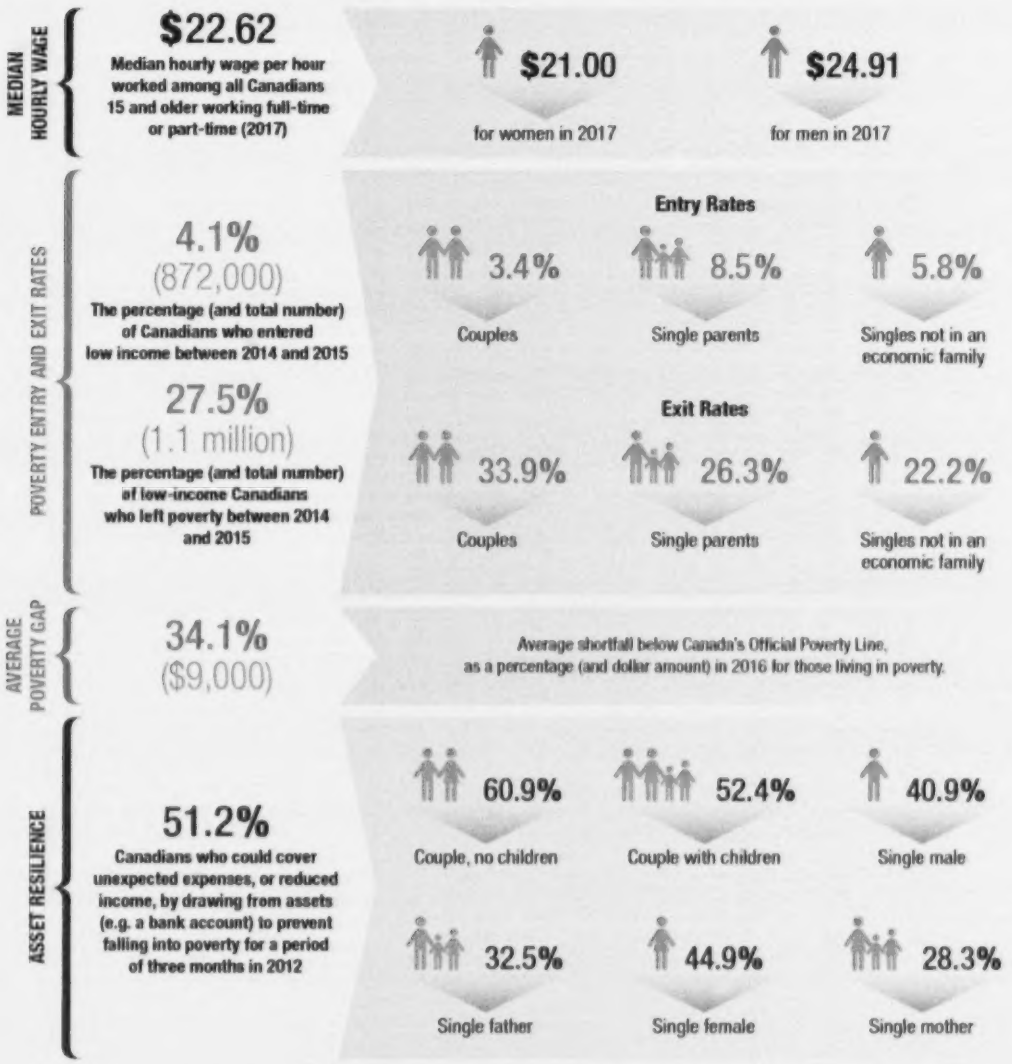
"Liquid assets provide a cushion against life's emergencies, help low-income families to smooth month-to-month income/expense gaps when incomes are volatile, and reduce the need to turn to costly, high-risk loans to make ends meet."

– Prosper Canada

Progress will be achieved if wages paid rise, and the percentage of Canadians falling into poverty each year decreases while the number of Canadians being lifted out of poverty each year increases. On average, Canadians living in poverty earn $9,000 less than Canada's Official Poverty Line. Therefore, progress will mean that Canadians living in poverty will see their incomes increase and move closer to the poverty line. Finally, progress will be achieved if more Canadian families are able to handle unexpected expenses, or reduced income and face the future with more security and confidence.

RESILIENCE and SECURITY

Support the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience



Statistics for each indicator are based on most recent available data. Going forward, *Opportunity for All* will track progress relative to 2015 levels or available data that is closest in time to 2015. Further details on poverty reduction indicators are available in Annex 1: The Statistical Fine Print. Poverty entry and exit rates are based on the Low Income Measure and are produced for taxfilers age 18 and over, by census family type, in the 10 provinces. The indicator is not currently available using Canada's Official Poverty Line and it is not available in the territories. Further research will be conducted to explore the feasibility of improving data collection for this indicator so that it could be tracked using Canada's Official Poverty Line. Statistics for Asset Resilience were based on the Low Income Measure and were derived from D. Rothwell and J. Robson, "The Prevalence and Composition of Asset Poverty in Canada: 1999, 2005, and 2012", International Journal of Social Welfare, 2017.

CHAPTER 6:
WORKING WITH PROVINCES, TERRITORIES AND COMMUNITIES

While *Opportunity for All* is a federal initiative, the Government of Canada knows that, to be successful, it cannot act alone. Partnerships are essential to implementing a poverty reduction strategy that works for all Canadians.

The Government recognizes the work accomplished by all the provinces and territories, all of which have poverty reduction strategies in place or in development. Provinces and territories have taken leadership roles and charted a way forward with poverty reduction strategies and initiatives, as have many communities across the country.

On July 31, 2018, provincial and territorial ministers released a joint statement on poverty reduction entitled, "Meeting the Challenge: Provincial-Territorial Vision Statement on Poverty Reduction." The Statement aligns well with *Opportunity for All* and can be seen in full on the next page. For example, the Statement includes a vision of all Canadians having the opportunity to live with dignity and reach their full potential; emphasizes collaboration to address social and economic challenges that cross levels of government; focuses on poverty reduction, prevention and alleviation; and highlights the importance of listening and incorporating views and perspectives of individuals with lived experience of poverty.

Moving forward in the service of all Canadians will require efforts that are aligned and complementary across orders of government, where feasible. This helps ensure that Canadians do not miss out on benefits to which they are entitled, or face gaps or duplication in government programming. It also ensures that interactions between federal and provincial or territorial programs do not have unintended consequences that adversely affect individuals and families. Alignment across the different orders of government will also ensure that communities throughout Canada will be well-positioned to help individuals move out of poverty.

The Government will build upon a strong track record of working with the provinces and territories. Since 2015, partnering between orders of government has led to successes in several key areas supporting the social and economic well-being of Canadians. This has included expanding the Canada Pension Plan, targeting investments in home care and mental health, signing agreements on early learning and child care, and collaborating with partners on initiatives like the Canada Community Housing Initiative and the National Housing Co-Investment Fund as outlined in the National Housing Strategy.

Collaboration has also meant, for example, that the new Canada Child Benefit is not considered income for the purposes of calculating social assistance and other provincial and territorial child benefit amounts. Cooperation has also given provinces and territories the opportunity to adjust certain parameters of both the Canada Child Benefit and the Canada Workers Benefit, so that these benefits can fit within the overall structure and context of provincial and territorial benefits and programs. Tailoring these programs allows provincial and territorial governments to meet the unique needs of communities in their respective jurisdictions.

Moving forward, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development will continue to work with provincial and territorial colleagues to coordinate current and future poverty reduction initiatives with a focus on addressing gaps in programming, preventing duplication and making sure that programs work well together. Federal, provincial and territorial ministers of social services will also continue to work together to identify mutual priorities for future work, share data, support a solid evidence base for future actions and share best practices so that all jurisdictions can take advantage of innovative solutions.

Meeting the Challenge:
Provincial-Territorial Vision Statement on Poverty Reduction

Vision:

All Canadians have the opportunity to live with dignity and realize their full potential. Provinces and territories are united in their vision of a Canada where all individuals are included, can develop to their full potential and can participate fully in social and economic life. This can be achieved by working in collaboration to address the social and economic disparities that exist today, and by creating the innovative and responsive solutions required to meet the challenges of the future.

Principles:

It is important that all Canadians are supported to develop to their full potential. Preventing and reducing poverty, as well as alleviating its impacts, are ongoing priorities for Provinces and Territories. A long term, collaborative effort from all governments is needed, as is the involvement of communities, community-based groups and individuals. We must find more effective ways to support those living in poverty and to protect those who are at risk, while recognizing the need for prevention and being able to respond to the changing nature of Canadian society.

Provincial and Territorial Governments have a responsibility to listen to those with lived experience of poverty and to work collaboratively to reduce poverty. Social change, emerging technologies, demographic shifts, and the evolving nature of work and labour markets present new challenges for our country and for reducing poverty. Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services are united in recognizing the need for innovative responses; we cannot meet these challenges while working in isolation and we can learn and build on experiences from across Canada.

Our poverty reduction efforts must also acknowledge the diverse circumstances in different parts of the country. The voices of those with lived experience, and the unique needs of rural and remote regions, urban areas, Indigenous communities, recent immigrants and refugees, children, youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities, as well as the gendered nature of poverty, must be central to poverty reduction work.

Poverty Reduction must recognize the historic and ongoing impacts of government policies on Indigenous peoples and poverty in Indigenous communities. In the spirit of reconciliation and renewed relationships, poverty reduction must support and empower Indigenous peoples, communities and leaders.

Respecting their distinct roles and responsibilities, Provincial and Territorial Ministers are committed to working collaboratively with the federal government and other partners in the development and implementation of meaningful and effective solutions that build upon the work of Provinces and Territories.

Priorities:

Provincial and Territorial Ministers are committed to working with each other and the Federal Government to prevent, reduce and alleviate poverty. Approaches to transformative change could include developing the tools, strategies, and policies, including:

- Future-proofing: Responding to the changing nature of work and other social changes, including ensuring that our social and income security systems reflect today's realities and are prepared for the trends and challenges of the future.
- Alignment: Better coordinating programs, services and policies to avoid duplication, maximize cumulative impact, and improve ease of access for individuals and families living in or vulnerable to poverty.
- Measurement: Developing, sharing, and using information to identify trends and gaps, and as appropriate, establishing common measures and indicators.
- Prevention-focused approach: Recognizing the multiple dimensions, causes and consequences of poverty and its intergenerational nature, ensuring an approach that is consistent with human rights principles and is focused on preventing poverty.

CHAPTER 7:
WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Government of Canada is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and to a renewed relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation and partnership. No relationship is more important to the Government of Canada than its relationship with Indigenous peoples.

As we spoke with Canadians about poverty, we heard that while there are some shared experiences, there are also unique differences in how poverty is experienced among First Nations, Inuit and Métis. This is largely the result of Canada's colonial history, in which Indigenous peoples have been subject to policies and actions that have had direct negative consequences on their standard of living and perpetuated cycles of poverty and marginalization over many generations.

As a result, certain barriers and challenges are unique to or greater for Indigenous peoples; these barriers and challenges may be even more pronounced for those living in northern or remote communities, women, LGBTQ2 and Two-Spirit people, and those with disabilities or functional limitations.

In response, *Opportunity for All* takes a distinctions-based approach to poverty reduction through the initiatives that the Strategy is built upon. A distinctions-based approach is one that recognizes and implements the unique rights, interests and circumstances of First Nations, Inuit and Métis. For example, the National Housing Strategy commits to the successful implementation of specific housing strategies for First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Similarly, the new Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program recognizes the unique needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis through the creation of distinct program and funding streams.

In addition, the Government's Early Learning and Child Care Framework includes a distinct Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework, to reflect the unique cultures and needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children.

Opportunity for All will also take actions to help better understand poverty among First Nations, Inuit and Métis—regardless of where they live in Canada.

During the consultation process, we heard that we should take a strengths-based approach to poverty reduction that focuses on well-being and supporting resilience. Indigenous women also told us that poverty is about more than a lack of income; it is also about social disconnection, and they explained that cultural activities promote social and economic well-being by improving self-confidence and building identity.

Accordingly, as part of the *Opportunity for All* distinctions-based approach, and based on the principles of reconciliation, the Government will work with National Indigenous Organizations and others to identify and co-develop indicators of poverty and well-being, including non-income-based measures of poverty, that reflect the multiple dimensions of poverty and well-being experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

The process established to better understand poverty and well-being from the perspective of Indigenous peoples and the co-development of indicators of poverty will respect the autonomy of Indigenous governments while laying the foundation for the Government of Canada to more respectfully support the achievement of better poverty reduction outcomes by Indigenous peoples over the long term.

The following pages outline First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspectives on poverty and their priorities for federal poverty reduction actions going forward in their own words. These sections were informed by First Nations, Inuit and Métis who shared their views on poverty and what they would want to see in a Poverty Reduction Strategy.

First Nations Perspectives on Poverty

When it comes to poverty for First Nations, "history matters." Colonialism has contributed to higher rates of poverty, and its legacy continues to increase the risk of poverty amongst First Nations individuals. First Nations communities have worked tirelessly over the years to determine the scope of poverty's impact in their communities, as well as determine and develop possible strategies, partnerships, programming and services they can turn to in order to address poverty in their lives.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy comes at an important time as First Nations people have seen promising advancements in their relationship with Canada. For example, the Government of Canada announced its intentions to adopt and fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, both of which contain provisions that support First Nations' economic well-being.

Despite these promising developments in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Canada, First Nations people still experience socio-economic marginalization. First Nations people are more likely to experience poverty in its most notable forms (income, employment, education and housing); however, First Nations poverty also goes beyond these common indicators, and compounds the effects of other issues such as health, mental health and addictions.

As the Government moves forward in implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy, it will need to continue in its joint effort with First Nations with a particular focus on improving the condition of First Nations elders, women, children and youth. This must be done in a way that addresses a history of colonialism, truly supports First Nations people in reducing poverty based on how poverty is experienced in their communities, and increases both individual and community well-being in a culturally sensitive way that respects First Nations perspectives and worldviews. Finally, gaps in data must be addressed so that the scope of poverty in First Nations communities can be fully understood.

Inuit Perspectives on Poverty

Inuit have experienced rapid social, economic and cultural changes in the last century, including longstanding human rights violations in the areas of health, housing and safety that continue today. Poverty among Inuit is a condition of colonization and is therefore associated with contemporary society. It is the broad outcome of the troubled shift from living with self-reliance and resourcefulness on the land to being settled in permanent municipalities where dependency on a cash economy and assistance from outside the community could not be avoided.

Inuit define poverty as lacking economic well-being, human capacities and capabilities, and social exclusion, including loss of self-reliance and connectedness. Inuit see poverty as inter-related, inter-connected and indivisible from other social determinants of health within our society. Inuit social determinants of health are in turn drivers of social and economic inequity, including poverty.

Inuit are at the lowest end of all well-being indicators in Canada. Reliance upon government support payments by Inuit households is high. Food security is a major issue. Inuit poverty is also evident in poor housing conditions. Other indicators demonstrating vulnerability to poverty amongst Inuit include poor educational and health outcomes, and inequitable participation in the wage-based economy. Cultural poverty has become another feature of poverty, with the erosion of language and Inuit culture and traditions. These are all part of Inuit poverty today.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami remains committed to working in partnership with the Government of Canada to promote poverty reduction in Inuit communities. Joint poverty reduction efforts must be responsive to Inuit understandings of poverty and the unique circumstances that have led to, and perpetuate, poverty across Inuit Nunangat. To this end, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami has identified seven priority areas for collaboration to improve the standard of living for Inuit and ensure that this parallels that of other Canadians:

1. Income Security;
2. Housing Security;
3. Food Security;
4. Early Learning and Child Care;
5. Education;
6. Health and Wellness; and
7. Livelihoods.

If we work together through a human rights framework to address the unique poverty circumstance of Inuit, the Poverty Reduction Strategy can advance our shared goals for reconciliation between Inuit and non-Inuit in Canada.

Métis Nation's Perspectives on Poverty

Most of the Métis Nation's policy and program initiatives during the past four decades have focused on improving the living standards of its citizens in general and those of its most vulnerable citizens in particular. These initiatives have proven successful in lifting many Métis people out of poverty by providing opportunities and resources previously beyond their reach.

At the same time, the Métis have faced and continue to face barriers in their relationship with Canada that have slowed the pace of their socio-economic development as demonstrated by unemployment rates higher than the rest of Canada, and Métis are over-represented at the lower end of educational attainment and under-represented at the higher end.

The commitment of the Government of Canada to strengthen the middle class and help low-income Canadians exit poverty offers strong potential to tackle these barriers.

The signing of a Canada-Métis Nation Accord on April 13, 2017, marked a significant step toward a renewed relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership. The Accord commits Canada and the Métis Nation to co-develop policies and programs to improve socio-economic conditions of Métis and their access to social and economic programs and services that address their needs.

Poverty reduction is a key priority in the Accord, including a commitment of the Government of Canada and the Métis Nation to work together. Collaboration should focus on addressing key dimensions of poverty reduction that are priorities for Métis, including: self-determination, housing, education, employment and training, early learning and child care, and health and wellness.

CHAPTER 8:
ENSURING A LASTING IMPACT

Opportunity for All sets historic targets to improve the well-being of Canadians that extend to 2030. Through this long-term plan, the Government will ensure that Canadians can monitor the progress being made and hold this and future governments accountable to ensure they deliver on commitments to reduce poverty and improve the lives of all Canadians.

Canada's Official Poverty Line

For the first time in Canada's history, the Government is setting an official measure of poverty. Canada's Official Poverty Line is based on the level of income that Canadians require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in 50 regions across the country. If Canadians cannot afford the basket of goods and services, they will be considered to be living in poverty. This is a truly made-in-Canada measure of poverty, based on the unique costs of items that individuals need in communities across Canada, from St. John's to Vancouver.

This official measure of poverty will help the Government and all Canadians **monitor progress** made toward reducing poverty. The more Canadians are lifted over the line, the more we can all thrive together.

Opportunity for All introduces Canada's first-ever official measure of poverty.

Setting Poverty Reduction Targets

Canada's Official Poverty Line will be used to measure progress toward two targets for poverty reduction, using a baseline year of 2015. These targets are ambitious but achievable, and would make a real difference in the lives of Canadians. They are:

- to reduce the rate of poverty by 20 percent by 2020; and
- to reduce the rate of poverty by 50 percent by 2030.

Meeting these targets will mark a significant reduction in poverty in our country, with 1 in 10 or about 10 percent of Canadians living in poverty by 2020, and 1 in 17 or roughly 6 percent of Canadians living in poverty by 2030. Progress toward the 2020 target is well on its way, as currently 10.6 percent or just over 1 in 10 Canadians are living in poverty.

Meeting the 2030 target would mean 2.1 million Canadians would be lifted out of poverty, based on Canada's population in 2015. This would mark the lowest poverty rate in Canada's history.

The Government is already working hard to meet these targets. Investments since 2015—helping groups such as children and families, low-income workers, seniors and many other groups vulnerable to poverty—**will lift about 650,000 Canadians out of poverty by 2019**. These Canadians are now **meeting their basic needs**, have the **opportunity** to join the middle class and are more **resilient** in handling life's setbacks.

> *Opportunity for All* sets concrete targets to reduce poverty.

Tracking Progress

In addition to tracking progress in poverty reduction through Canada's Official Poverty Line, a dashboard of indicators will be made available online, so that Canadians can clearly see the progress that has been made. These indicators will reflect what Canadians have told us is meaningful to them in poverty reduction, they will be measurable so all Canadians can see the progress and they will be monitored so that the Government will be held accountable to ensure it is making progress.

The dashboard will track, for example, the reduction in food insecurity levels, the attainment of skills required to get good jobs and the number of Canadians with enough savings to handle setbacks in their lives. These measures of poverty go beyond income and will help monitor progress toward a fuller vision of what Canadians have told us is important to them: to live with dignity, to have access to opportunity and to remain resilient in the face of adversity.

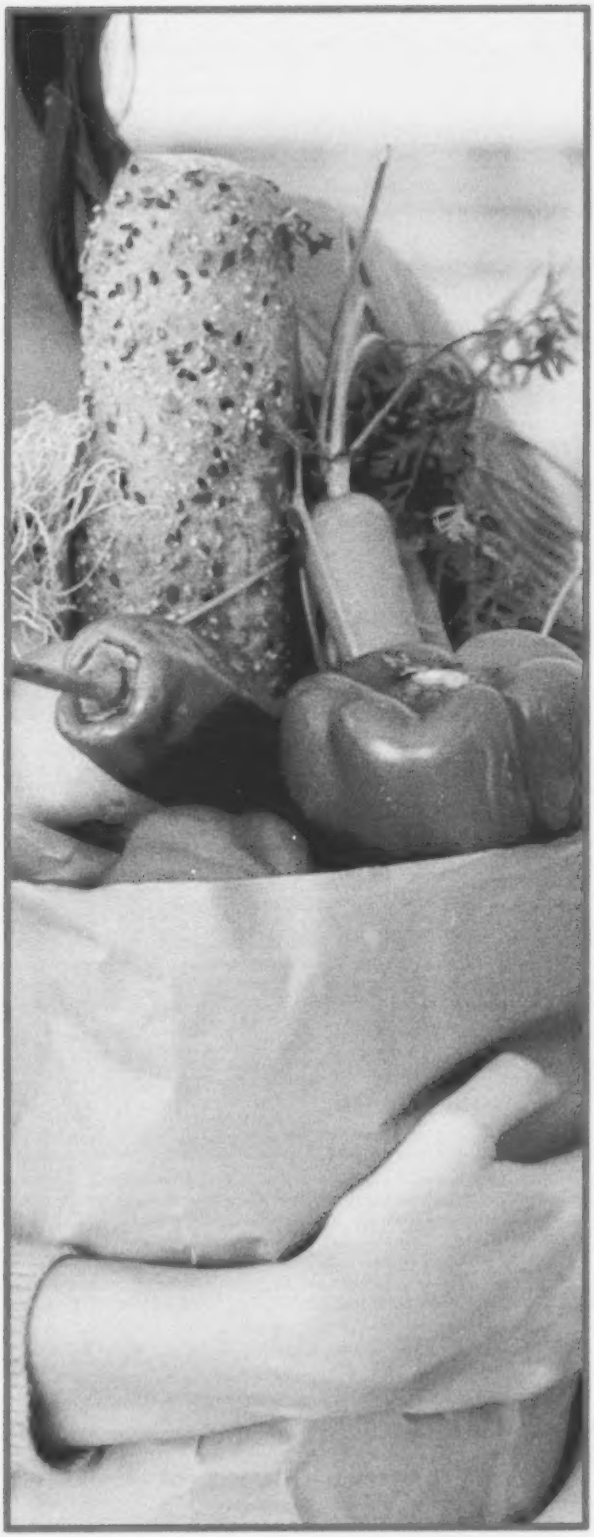
National Advisory Council on Poverty

Canadians have been clear about their desire for a serious commitment to reducing poverty. Throughout its consultations, the Government heard from Canadians that words are important, but action is paramount. To ensure accountability, the Government will establish, and proposes to legislate, a **National Advisory Council on Poverty** with a membership that reflects the diversity of Canada and a mandate to advise the Government on poverty reduction and produce a report on the Government's progress toward meeting targets every year. The annual reports will be public and tabled in Parliament every year.

Throughout the poverty reduction strategy consultation process, Canadians spoke and the Government listened. Canadians must continue to be heard throughout our journey to 2030. That is why the Council will also foster a national dialogue on poverty reduction with stakeholder groups; First Nations, Inuit, and Métis; academics; and all Canadians who are, ultimately, at the centre of *Opportunity for All*.

Poverty Reduction Legislation

The Government proposes to introduce a Poverty Reduction Act in Parliament to entrench the targets, Canada's Official Poverty Line and the Advisory Council into law. This would help cement the Government's commitment to poverty reduction and ensure that poverty reduction remains a lasting priority well into the future.



CHAPTER 9: IMPROVING MEASUREMENT OF POVERTY

All Canadians should expect a solid evidence base to inform progress on poverty reduction. Quality evidence leads to informed decision-making, which in turn leads to helping more Canadians reach their full potential. *Opportunity for All* outlines the Government's plan to strengthen poverty measurement, identify gaps and gather data to guide our journey to 2030.

As a first step, beginning in 2018–19, the Government is investing $12.1 million over five years, and $1.5 million per year thereafter, to address key gaps in poverty measurement in Canada, for example, in Canada's north. This will give governments, stakeholders, service delivery organizations, academics and the general public greater insight into what is working, what could be changed or enhanced, and what further support is needed to meet targets and improve the lives of all Canadians.

Strengthening Data on Poverty

Canada's Official Poverty Line will be based on the costs of a typical basket of goods and services that Canadian families use in real life. This measure will allow Canadians to track how we are meeting our poverty reduction targets in a way that reflects the financial pressures that families face on a daily basis.

Statistics Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada will update the basket to reflect the reality of what is needed to participate in society today and going forward, with further updates taking place on a regular basis. This will include ensuring that it continues to reflect a modest standard of living suitable for the current day (for example, removing videotape rentals and updating other items such as Internet access).

The plan to improve the measurement of poverty will also include closing gaps in the North by expanding the Canadian Income Survey so that Canada's Official Poverty Line can be calculated in the territories. In addition, Statistics Canada will explore the feasibility of ensuring that the basket of goods and services reflects the unique costs of living in Canada's northern and remote communities.

Introducing the new Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics

In Budget 2018, the Government announced $6.7 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, and $0.6 million per year ongoing, for the creation of the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics.

The Centre will track the Government's progress towards a more equal society by addressing gaps in the availability of disaggregated data on gender, race and other intersecting identities. This work will help enrich our understanding of barriers that different groups face, including women and individuals from racialized communities, and how best to support them with evidence-based policy.

As part of the Strategy's distinctions-based approach, and based on the principles of reconciliation, the Government will work with National Indigenous Organizations and others to identify and co-develop indicators of poverty and well-being that reflect the multiple dimensions of poverty and well-being experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

And finally, this will mean expanding the Canadian Income Survey as well as using other sources such as the Census to permit more detailed analysis of poverty for specific groups, such as racialized communities, persons with disabilities, lone-parent families, immigrants, seniors, LGBTQ2 and others.

Statistics Canada will also strive to close gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the various dimensions of poverty, including the poverty reduction impacts of non-monetary benefits like rent subsidies. In addition, further research will also be undertaken on a range of topics, including entry and exit rates from poverty, the presence of poverty in different regions of the country and the persistence of poverty, particularly among specific groups, such as Black Canadians and other racialized communities.

Creation of a Dashboard of Indicators

Opportunity for All introduces a dashboard of indicators to track progress on the many aspects of poverty, from different measures of low income, to Canadians in housing need, to the differences in earnings and life outcomes between low-income Canadians and those in the middle class.

The publicly available online dashboard will allow all Canadians to monitor progress, and it will be regularly updated as new information becomes available. Statistics Canada will continue to fill gaps in the frequency and quality of information, and will provide more detail when available. For example, data will be disaggregated by geographic and socio-demographic characteristics, including gender. In particular, this will include disaggregating data wherever possible to better understand poverty among various groups, including Black Canadians and other racialized communities. These steps will help Canadians track our progress on reducing poverty using the most up-to-date and reliable data.

While Canada's Official Poverty Line will be the official measure of poverty, Statistics Canada will also continue to measure relative low income using the Low Income Measure (LIM) and will explore making the LIM more sensitive to regional differences. The LIM is a relative measure of low income that tracks the proportion of Canadians with incomes that are below 50 percent of the median after-tax and transfer income. Since many countries report low income on this basis, it is frequently used for international comparisons.

We Are All Part of Measuring Poverty

Taken together, these steps will strengthen our understanding of poverty in Canada according to the highest statistical standards. Creating a transparent process for how we measure poverty will allow all Canadians to join the conversation in assessing how the Government is doing and determining where more could be done to meet poverty reduction targets.

CHAPTER 10:
GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS (GBA+)

Opportunity for All recognizes the importance of ensuring that all Canadians, regardless of their gender or other identity factors such as race or family composition, have equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from prosperity in Canada. The Government has developed *Opportunity for All* using a GBA+ lens in order to take into consideration the variation in experiences and barriers that different groups face related to poverty. Some of these groups include women, persons with disabilities, newcomers to Canada, single parents, unattached individuals, Indigenous peoples, trans-gendered and non-binary individuals, and individuals from Black and other racialized communities. Under-standing the unique risk factors, the impact of intersecting experiences, and the needs of diverse groups will help the Government to tailor interventions under the Strategy to more effectively address poverty in Canada. Going forward, this approach will continue to be applied to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of *Opportunity for All*. The goal of *Opportunity for All* is to reduce and remove systemic barriers, and promote equal opportunity for all Canadians. Individual initiatives under the Strategy will also apply a GBA+ lens in their design, implementation and evaluation, in order to promote conditions of equity and concretely address these barriers.

It's Time: Canada's Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence

In 2017, the Government released its Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence, which is centred on prevention, supporting survivors and their families and promoting a responsive legal and justice system.

Many of the same groups that are at risk of poverty are also at risk of gender-based violence. These groups may include: women and girls; Indigenous peoples; LGBTQ2 members; gender non-conforming individuals; racialized people; those living in northern, rural and remote communities; people with disabilities; newcomers to Canada, children and youth; and seniors.

Opportunity for All and the Strategy on Gender-Based Violence will both help lay the foundation for filling the gaps in support of these diverse populations.

The Impact of Poverty on Women

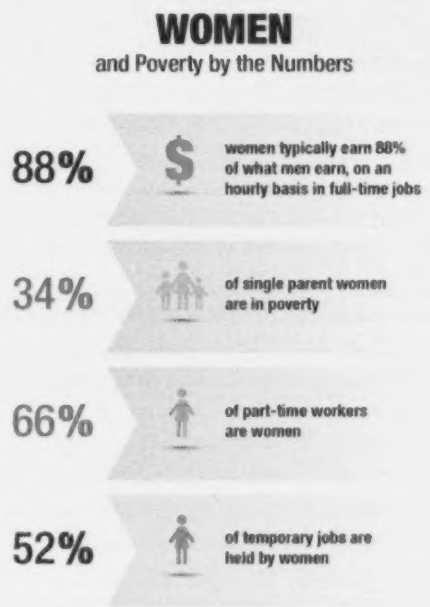
Historically, women have been more likely to live in poverty than men, although in 2016 the overall percentage of men (10.3 percent) and women (10.8 percent) in poverty was about the same. However, across Canada, some women face unique barriers that can make them more vulnerable to poverty than men.

For example, 80 percent of single parents are women. Over one-third of single parent women live in poverty. Women continue to take on the majority of caregiving responsibilities and put more hours into their caregiving activities than men—which becomes much more stressful if they are also struggling to make ends meet. It is particularly important to address poverty among women because of the added impact of poverty on their children and other dependants in the household, such as an aging or sick family member.

Women and Work

Though women have increasingly made gains in employment since the mid-1970s, the percentage of women employed (58 percent) still remains below that of men (65 percent) in 2017. Women are also more likely than men to work in precarious employment arrangements, such as contract work, or temporary or involuntary part-time jobs.

Women continue to face other inequities relative to men. For example, because women continue to assume the primary family caregiving role, they are more likely to work reduced hours or miss work due to these responsibilities, although this trend is decreasing. Women are also generally paid less than men doing similar work, with women earning about 12 percent less in terms of their average hourly wages among full-time employees. The groups most affected by this earnings gap are female newcomers


WOMEN
and Poverty by the Numbers
88%
women typically earn 88% of what men earn, on an hourly basis in full-time jobs
34%
of single parent women are in poverty
66%
of part-time workers are women
52%
of temporary jobs are held by women

to Canada, women with disabilities and Indigenous women. The availability and affordability of child care, and increased sharing of caregiver responsibilities by both parents, is key to supporting female participation in the workforce.

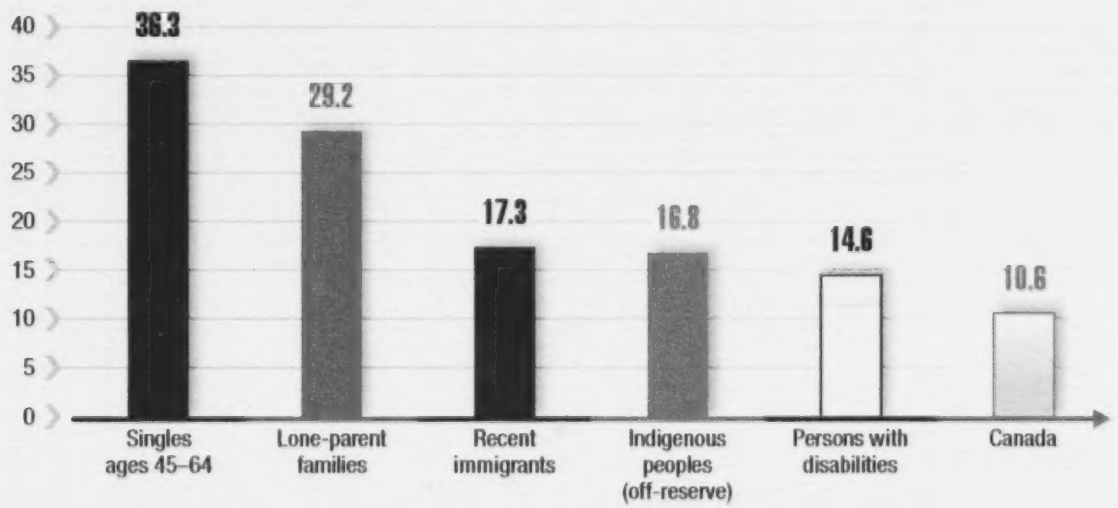
The Impact of Poverty on Other Canadians

Certain groups, such as single-parent families, single people aged 45 to 64, persons with disabilities, recent immigrants and Indigenous peoples, are more likely to live in low income than others. Some individuals may also face intersecting challenges that make them more at risk of poverty, for example, individuals from Black or other racialized communities, and transgender individuals. In addition to being more likely to experience low income, these groups are also statistically more likely to live in low income for long periods of time. This is troubling because the longer a person is poor, the harder it is for them to get out of poverty.

Individuals living in northern and remote communities can also experience distinct challenges that make them more at risk of living in poverty, such as increased costs of food, barriers to accessing health care and unmet housing needs, which are particular challenges in Nunavut.

Although a similar proportion of men and women live in poverty overall, there are some exceptions. Notably, 14 percent of single male seniors live in poverty, compared to 10 percent of single female seniors. By contrast, 36 percent of single working-age women live in poverty, compared to 32 percent of single working-age men.

Canadians Most at Risk of Living in Poverty



Based on Canada's Official Poverty Line and most recent Statistics Canada data in 2016.
Low-income estimates for Canada's Official Poverty Line are currently not available for people living on reserve and for people living in the territories. However, living conditions on reserve and statistics on income, educational and employment outcomes suggests that poverty is higher than off-reserve.

Elements of* Opportunity for All *Most Relevant to GBA+

Opportunity for All is grounded in and supportive of the Government's commitment to GBA+. Certain elements of the Strategy are particularly relevant to those groups negatively impacted on the basis of gender and other identity factors.

The investments and work that will go into producing better poverty data, including the creation of a **dashboard** of indicators of various dimensions of poverty, will allow the Government, and all Canadians, to monitor the progress being made to reduce poverty amongst women and other at-risk groups. Where possible, data will be disaggregated by geographic and other identity characteristics—such as belonging to a racialized group and gender—to help the Government better understand groups most at risk of poverty and determine what characteristics make an individual more likely to need added support. The ongoing monitoring of progress and the disaggregation of data will also allow for the identification of gaps in poverty reduction efforts, and will inform future government actions so that no groups of Canadians are left behind.

In addition, the creation of a new **Centre for Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion Statistics** at Statistics Canada will help track the Government's progress towards a more equal society. It will improve our understanding of barriers faced by different groups—such as women and individuals from racialized communities—and how best to support them with evidence-based policy. The Centre will maintain a public-facing **GBA+ data hub** to support evidence-based policy development and decision-making—both within the federal government and beyond.

As the Government forms the **National Advisory Council on Poverty** to track and publicly report on progress toward poverty reduction each year, appointments will focus on recruiting qualified candidates who also reflect Canada's diversity. Consideration for appointments will include factors such as linguistic and regional diversity, and groups more vulnerable to poverty. The Council will also provide guidance on how to reach the poverty reduction targets, including advice on where best to focus the Government's efforts to support women and other at-risk groups.

The Way Forward

Opportunity for All seeks to improve the social and economic well-being of all Canadians, with a particular focus on groups most at risk of poverty. As the Government works toward its poverty reduction targets, it will continue to evaluate progress based on data, based on what Canadians are telling the Government is important to them for poverty reduction, and always considering options for current and future actions through a GBA+ lens.

The Government is strongly committed to achieving gender equality. This can be seen in many of its actions, such as its strategy on Gender-Based Violence, its commitment to introducing pay equity legislation, and Budget 2018, where no decision was taken without being informed by GBA+. As well, many recent investments are particularly beneficial to women, such as the introduction and indexation of the Canada Child Benefit and the increase in the Guaranteed Income Supplement payments for low-income seniors.

Opportunity for All builds on these steps and actions and ensures that GBA+ is an integral part of the program design and decision-making process to ensure that all Canadians, regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or other identity factors, can reach their full potential and not live in poverty.

GBA+ in Action

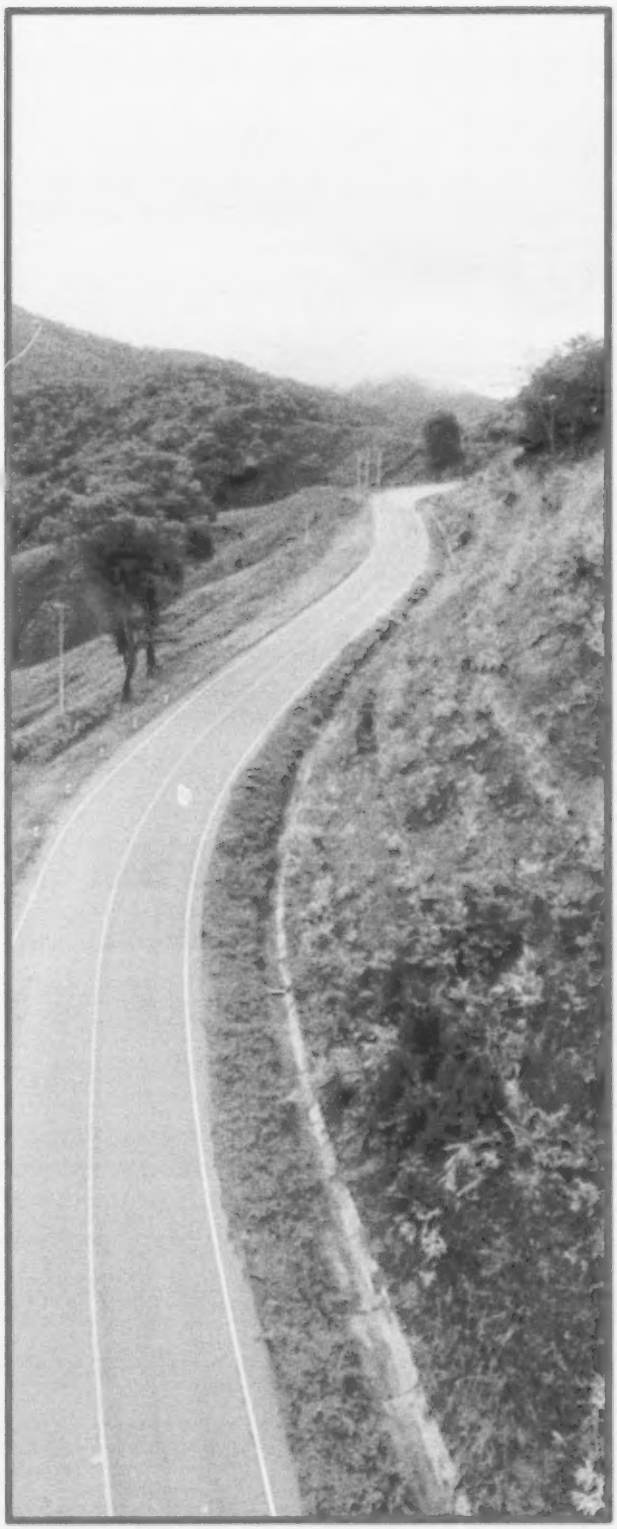
Nine out of 10 Canadian families are receiving more money under the Canada Child Benefit—particularly beneficial for low-income single mothers.

The recent increase to Employment Insurance parental leave by up to five weeks in cases where the second parent agrees to take a minimum of five weeks of parental leave will help improve the sharing of caregiving responsibilities by both parents.

Increased Guaranteed Income Supplement payments of up to $947 per year are helping nearly 900,000 low-income seniors, 70 percent of whom are women.

A new National Housing Strategy will support vulnerable populations, with at least 33 percent of investments to support projects that target the unique needs of women and girls.

Greater funding to improve the health of First Nations and Inuit, including services that are women-specific, such as maternal and child health.



CHAPTER 11:
GOING FORWARD: CANADA IN 2030

Opportunity for All is guided by the Government's commitment to make real, positive change in the lives of Canadians now and into the future. Its targets for poverty reduction are reflected in Canada's international commitments to make progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, including reducing Canada's poverty rate by 50 percent.

The road to *Opportunity for All* has been a journey through communities large and small, from all corners of the country—from St. John's, to Iqaluit, to Vancouver, to Hamilton. The Government took this road so it could hear directly from thousands of Canadians.

Canadians have asked for a bold vision, but also for a concrete plan to address some of their most pressing needs, the barriers they face and uncertainties in their lives. *Opportunity for All* is that vision and that plan.

Dignity, opportunity and inclusion, resilience and security are at the core of this vision. *Opportunity for All* also sets an official poverty line for Canada with measurable targets to guide action toward longer-term well-being.

The elements laid out in *Opportunity for All* aim to bring us to a better Canada in 2030. A Canada that is both a global economic leader and a kind and generous country where no one is left behind. A Canada that adapts to changing economic conditions and benefits from a healthy and productive workforce. A Canada that has met the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and where meaningful progress has been made against the multiple dimensions of poverty.

Ultimately, Canada in 2030 will be a country where all Canadians can contribute to the best of their ability and reach their full potential.

The Road to 2030

The release of *Opportunity for All* is not the end of the journey. It is a point in time to take stock of our accomplishments to date and lay out a plan for the road ahead in order to meet concrete, ambitious targets.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

***Opportunity for All* engages Canada with the world**

On September 25, 2015, Canada was one of 150 countries to adopt a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved by 2030.

The long-term target of **Opportunity for All** *to reduce poverty by 50 percent by 2030 is aligned with the 1st Sustainable Development Goal: "By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions."*

Looking ahead, the Government has already identified some challenges and has stated where it intends to take action. This includes plans to develop a National Food Policy; the creation of an Advisory Council to move toward implementing a national pharmacare program; working with stakeholders to develop a Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy to better support community organizations working to address persistent social and environmental challenges using innovative approaches; and plans to make a more fair and inclusive society through the recent introduction of the Accessible Canada Act in Parliament, as well as upcoming pay equity legislation. The Government has also already started on the path to reconciliation, and is committed to continuing to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples.

Looking forward, the Government will regularly update Canada's Official Poverty Line to reflect the costs and items that comprise the basket of goods and services that Canadians require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in communities across the country. The Government will also continue to examine the impact that poverty has on specific groups and where further action could be taken to build on the vast array of investments that have already been made.

As the Government moves toward 2030, data gaps will be identified and addressed. The evidence base will be enhanced by new investments in good-quality data, as well as by taking the steps necessary to acquire better information, particularly in northern communities and for First Nations people living on-reserve.

Progress is being made but governments cannot and should not act alone. That is why *Opportunity for All* is also a call to action to all Canadians, because we are all stronger when we work together.

The Government will continue to work in partnership with Indigenous peoples to realize a Canada where meaningful reconciliation is achieved with First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

The Government will also work closely with other partners to realize this vision. It will work with provinces, territories and municipalities, and forge strong bonds with stakeholders and community groups on the front lines of tackling poverty in communities across Canada. The Government will engage academics and social innovators looking for new solutions to address the causes and consequences of poverty. The Government is also inviting the private sector to do its part. And, finally, the Government will continue to tap into the rich knowledge, experience and ideas that come from all Canadians, particularly those who live in poverty.

Canada has reason to look to the future with confidence and optimism. Acting together, we can ensure that in the Canada of 2030, all Canadians will live with dignity, have real and fair access to opportunities, and remain resilient through all of life's challenges. And by 2030, Canada will see millions lifted out of poverty. Let's continue our journey together.

ANNEX 1:
THE STATISTICAL FINE PRINT

Opportunity for All includes a series of indicators to track progress in reducing poverty in Canada. This annex provides further background on statistics, definitions of indicators and other elements that make up the data and measurement components of *Opportunity for All*.

Canada's Official Poverty Line

Opportunity for All introduces Canada's Official Poverty Line of poverty. This measure will be used to track progress toward the two poverty reduction targets, using 2015 levels as the baseline:

- a 20 percent reduction by 2020; and
- a 50 percent reduction by 2030.

> *Poverty is:*
>
> *The condition of a person who is deprived of the resources, means, choices and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society.*

In 2015, 1 in every 8 or 12.1 percent of Canadians lived in poverty. Meeting these targets will mark a significant reduction in poverty in our country, with 1 in 10 or 9.7 percent of Canadians living in poverty by 2020, and 1 in 17 or 6.1 percent of Canadians living in poverty by 2030. This would lift 2.1 million Canadians out of poverty, based on Canada's population in 2015. Meeting these targets will mark historic lows in Canadian poverty rates.

Canada's Official Poverty Line is based on the cost of a basket of goods and services individuals and families need in order to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in communities across Canada. The reference family for calculating Canada's Official Poverty Line is two adults between 25 and 49 years, and two children, a 9-year-old girl and a 13-year-old boy. These expenditures are then adjusted for family size and extrapolated to all other Canadians. If Canadians cannot afford this basket of goods and services, then they will be considered to be living in poverty.

The basket of goods and services includes items such as clothing and footwear, transportation, nutritious food and shelter (including electricity, heat and clean water), and other necessary goods and services, such as personal care items and household supplies.

The cost of the basket of goods and services is adjusted to reflect the cost of living in 50 different communities across Canada. This covers all the provinces, 19 specific communities and 31 provincial regions according to population size. The plan to improve the measurement of poverty will also include closing gaps in the North by expanding the Canadian Income Survey so that Canada's Official Poverty Line can be calculated in the territories. In addition, Statistics Canada will explore the feasibility of ensuring that the basket of goods and services reflects the unique costs of living in Canada's northern and remote communities. Statistics Canada will also regularly update the cost and the items within the basket of goods and services to ensure that it continues to reflect what Canadians require to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living. The Government is committed to improving measurement and data collection

to inform progress in poverty reduction; further information on these steps can be found in Chapter 9 – Improving Measurement of Poverty.

Measures of Low Income in Canada

Statistics Canada has three measures to track low income rates in Canada. Canada's Official Poverty Line will now be the official measure of poverty in Canada. However, Statistics Canada will continue to measure low income based on different concepts.

***Canada's Official Poverty Line**:* *A household is considered to be in poverty if it does not have enough money to buy a specific basket of goods and services that allows it to meet its basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in its community. As this measure is based on having or not having enough money to purchase a fixed basket of goods and services, it is an absolute measure of poverty.*

***Low-Income Measure (LIM)**:* *A household is considered to be in low income if its income is below 50 percent of median household incomes, accounting for household size. As this measure moves according to the changing incomes of the total population, it is a relative measure of poverty.*

***Low-Income Cut-Offs (LICO)**:* *A household is considered to be in low income if it spends 20 percent more on food, shelter and clothing than the average family. This measurement is based on 1992 spending patterns of Canadian families.*

*formerly known as the Market Basket Measure

MEASURING AND MONITORING PROGRESS

with Canada's Official Poverty Line

DURING 2015

Canada's Official Poverty Line for a family of **two adults** and **two children** averaged

$37,542

across the **50 regions** for which it is calculated,

varying from **$32,871** in parts of the province of Quebec,

to **$40,777** in parts of the province of Alberta.

For individuals living on their own it is half as high, ranging from **$16,436** to **$20,389**.

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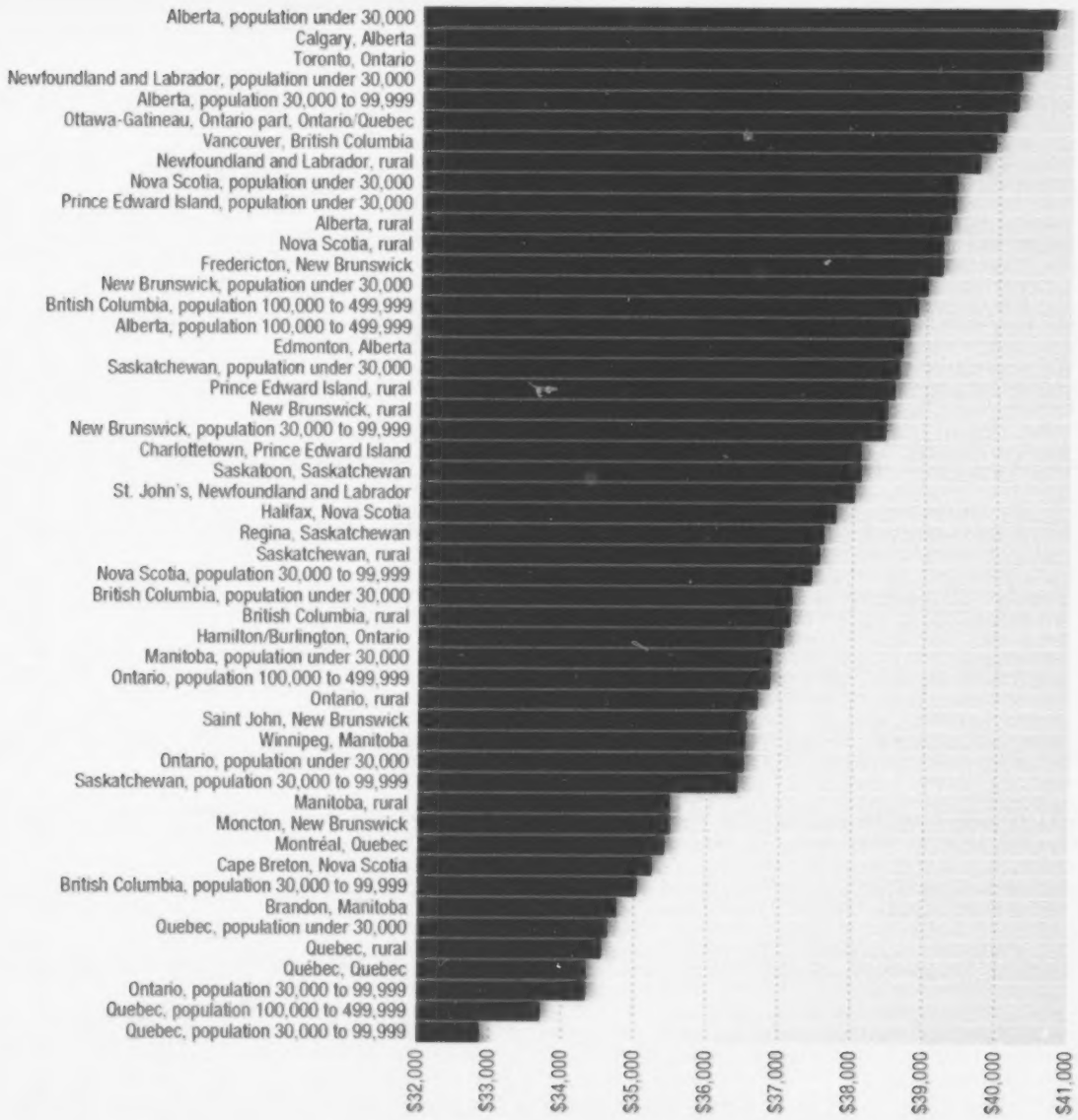
2015 Canada's Official Poverty Line by Region



Snapshot of

CANADA'S OFFICIAL POVERTY LINE

where it is the highest in Canada

Mike and Shobana live in Cold Lake, Alberta with their two children, Marriam and William.

In 2015, cities and towns in the province of Alberta with populations of 30,000 and under like Cold Lake had the highest cost of a basket of goods and services to meet Canada's Official Poverty Line with a total cost of

$40,777

In 2015, the **patterns of consumption** on which Canada's Official Poverty Line is based would suggest that, on average, a family like Mike and Shobana's, living on the poverty line in their community, would have enough money to spend approximately the amounts shown below to meet their basic needs and maintain a modest standard of living over the course of a year.*

Clothing and Footwear
$1,603 or $134 per month

Transportation
$4,402 or $367 per month

Nutritious Food
$12,437 or
$1,036 per month

Shelter
(including electricity, heat, clean water)
$11,754 or
$980 per month

Other Goods and Services
(including personal care items, basic telephone service, reading, recreation, entertainment, and school supplies)
$10,581 or $882 per month

* Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

Snapshot of

CANADA'S OFFICIAL POVERTY LINE

where it is the lowest in Canada

Lysanne and Eric live in Blainville, Quebec with their two children, Maxime and Danielle.

In 2015, cities and towns in the province of Quebec with populations of 30,000 to 99,999 like Blainville had the lowest cost of a basket of goods and services to meet Canada's Official Poverty Line with a total cost of

$32,871

In 2015, the **patterns of consumption** on which Canada's Official Poverty Line is based would suggest that, on average, a family like Lysanne and Eric's, living on the poverty line in their community, would have enough money to spend approximately the amounts shown below to meet their basic needs and maintain a modest standard of living over the course of a year.*

Clothing and Footwear
$1,926 or $161 per month

Transportation
$2,307 or $192 per month

Nutritious Food
$11,367 or
$947 per month

Shelter
(including electricity, heat, clean water)
$7,252 or
$604 per month

Other Goods and Services
(including personal care items, basic telephone service, reading, recreation, entertainment, and school supplies)
$10,018 or $835 per month

* Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

Canada's Official Poverty Line Basket Items

The following provides a greater description of each item within the current basket of goods and services used to calculate Canada's Official Poverty Line.

Clothing and Footwear
The "Clothing and Footwear" category is based upon a list of items specified by the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg and Winnipeg Harvest Acceptable Level of Living basket. These were chosen as they reflect clothing and footwear for common work, school and social occasions. Adjustments have been made to the clothing basket to ensure it meets a modest, acceptable standard.

Transportation
"Transportation" costs are determined according to whether public transit is available in the community. It is the annual cost of two monthly adult transit passes and one round trip taxi fare each month in urban centres served by public transit. In areas without public transit it is based on the costs of paying for and operating a five-year-old automobile.

Nutritious Food
The "Nutritious Food" category is based on the 2008 National Nutritious Food Basket, developed by Health Canada in consultation with provincial and territorial nutritionists. This basket is intended to represent a nutritional diet consistent with the actual purchases of ordinary Canadians, and healthy foods people like to eat.

Shelter
"Shelter" costs reflect the typical rent for two- and three-bedroom rental units in each community, and include the costs of water, heat and electricity, as well as a stove, refrigerator and use of a washer and dryer.

Other Goods and Services
The "Other Goods and Services" category represents expenditure on other necessities such as personal care items, household needs, furniture (excluding those already in the shelter component), basic telephone service, reading, recreation, entertainment and school supplies. This category comprises roughly 25 percent of the cost of all basket items to meet

Comparing the
BASKET COSTS
in the highest and lowest regions in Canada
for individuals living alone

For individuals living on their own, Canada's Official Poverty Line is half as high. In the examples shown above, Canada's Official Poverty Line would be

$20,389
for an individual living alone in Cold Lake, Alberta

$16,436
for an individual living alone in Blainville, Quebec

Therefore, in 2015, the **patterns of consumption** on which Canada's Official Poverty Line is based would suggest that, on average, individuals living alone and on the poverty line in these communities would have enough money to spend approximately the amounts shown below to meet their basic needs and maintain a modest standard of living over the course of a year:*

Cold Lake, Alberta	Blainville, Quebec
Clothing and Footwear $802 or $67 per month	**Clothing and Footwear** $963 or $80 per month
Transportation $2,201 or $183 per month	**Transportation** $1,154 or $96 per month
Nutritious Food $6,219 or $518 per month	**Nutritious Food** $5,684 or $474 per month
Shelter (including electricity, heat, clean water) $5,877 or $490 per month	**Shelter** (including electricity, heat, clean water) $3,626 or $302 per month
Other Goods and Services (including personal care items, basic telephone service, reading, recreation, entertainment, and school supplies) $5,291 or $441 per month	**Other Goods and Services** (including personal care items, basic telephone service, reading, recreation, entertainment, and school supplies) $5,009 or $418 per month

* Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

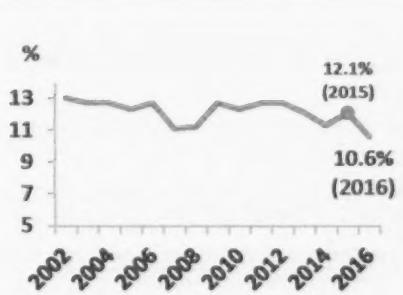
Canada's Official Poverty Line. Therefore, individuals in deep income poverty (incomes below 75 percent of Canada's Official Poverty Line) would not be able to afford the items in this category of the basket of goods and services.

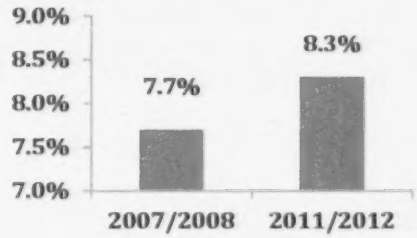
The following table presents a list of current indicators that will be tracked as part of the dashboard, including a description of each indicator, a snapshot of the most recent data and longer-term trend, as well as the data source and how frequently data is collected. Each indicator is grouped under one of the three pillars of *Opportunity for All:* Dignity, Opportunity and Inclusion, and Resilience and Security.

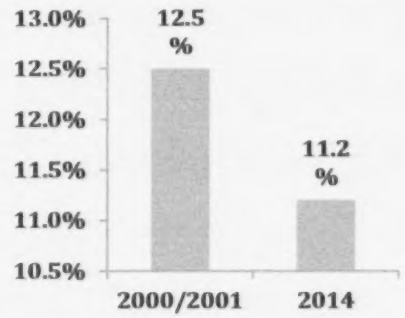
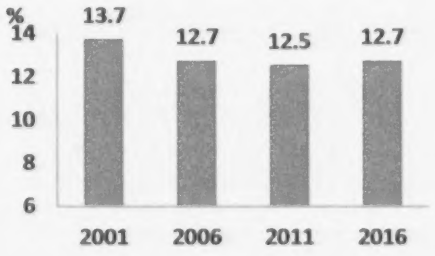
Additional Indicators to Track Progress in Poverty Reduction

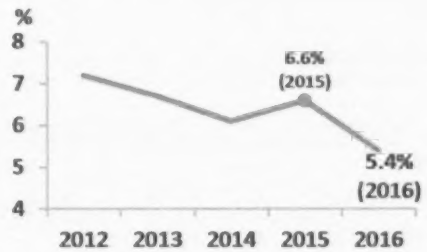
Opportunity for All introduces a dashboard of indicators to track progress on deep income poverty as well as the aspects of poverty other than income, including indicators of material deprivation, lack of opportunity and resilience.

The dashboard will be made available online and allow all Canadians to monitor progress and hold the Government to account. It will be regularly updated as new information becomes available. The Government will continue to fill gaps in the frequency and quality of information so that Canadians can track the most up-to-date and reliable data and the Government's progress in reducing poverty.

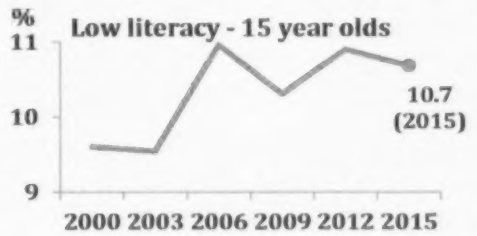
Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend	Data Source and Frequency
Canada's Official Poverty Line	Based on the cost of a basket of goods and services that individuals and families need in order to meet their basic needs and achieve a modest standard of living in communities across Canada.	10.6 percent of Canadians lived below Canada's Official Poverty Line in 2016, down from 12.1 percent in 2015. 	Canadian Income Survey – Annually 2017 data will be available in early 2019.
Lifting Canadians out of poverty by ensuring basic needs–such as safe and affordable housing, healthy food, and health care–are met			

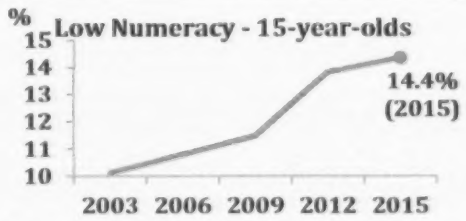
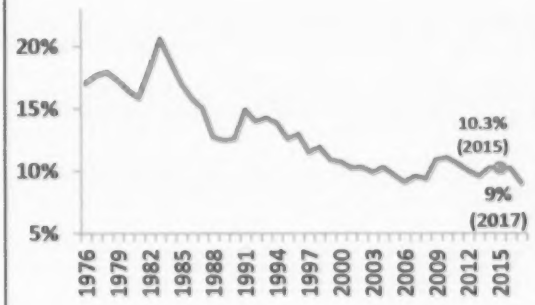
Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend	Data Source and Frequency
Food Insecurity	Households that do not have enough money to purchase or access a sufficient amount and variety of food to live a healthy lifestyle.	8.3 percent of Canadian households were food insecure in 2011–12, up from 7.7 percent in 2007–08.  *Data available for all provinces and territories for 2007–08 and 2011–12.*	Canadian Community Health Survey – Annually 2017–18 data will be available in late 2018. *While the survey itself is conducted annually, food security is optional content and not collected by all provinces and territories. Options are being explored with Statistics Canada to collect annually for all provinces and territories.*
Unmet Health Needs	Canadians that reported that their health care needs were not met	11.2 percent of Canadians 12 years and older reported not receiving health care when they felt they needed it in 2014, down from 12.5 percent in 2000–01.	Canadian Community Health Survey –

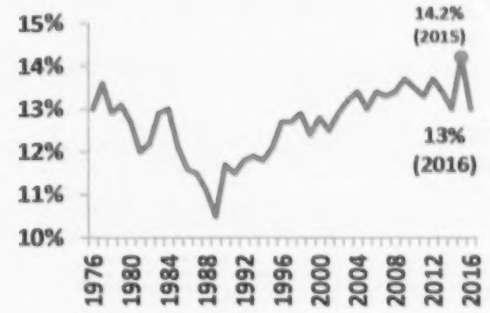
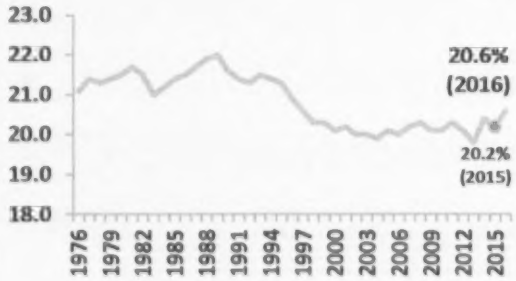
Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend	Data Source and Frequency
	when they needed it during the past 12 months.	 *Data available for all provinces and territories for 2000–01 and 2014.*	Annually *While the survey itself is collected annually, unmet health needs is optional content and not collected by all provinces and territories. Options are being explored with Statistics Canada to collect data on unmet health needs annually for all provinces and territories.*
Unmet Housing Needs and Chronic Home-lessness	Unmet Housing Needs: Canadians who are in housing that is unaffordable (more than 30 percent of before-tax household income); in need of major repairs; unsuitable for the size and makeup of a family and the	12.7 percent of Canadian households experienced housing need in 2016, same as in 2006 and slightly up from 12.5 percent in 2011. 	Census – Every five years 2021 data will be released in 2022.

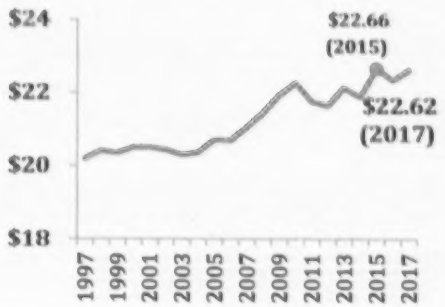
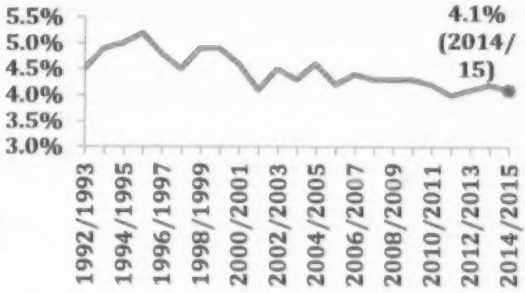
Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend	Data Source and Frequency
	family cannot afford a suitable and adequate home in their community. Chronic Homelessness: Canadians that used a shelter for six months or more in the past year, and/or had shelter stays in each of the last three years.	27,000 Canadians were chronically homeless in 2016.	National Homelessness Information System – Annually 2017 data is expected to be available in late 2018. Measurement will be complemented in the coming years by improved community-level data.
Deep Income Poverty	Individuals below 75 percent of Canada's Official Poverty Line.	5.4 percent of Canadians were living in deep income poverty in 2016, down from 6.6 percent in 2015. 	Canadian Income Survey – Annually 2017 data will be available in early 2019.

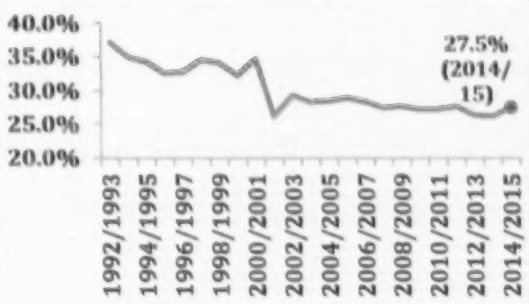
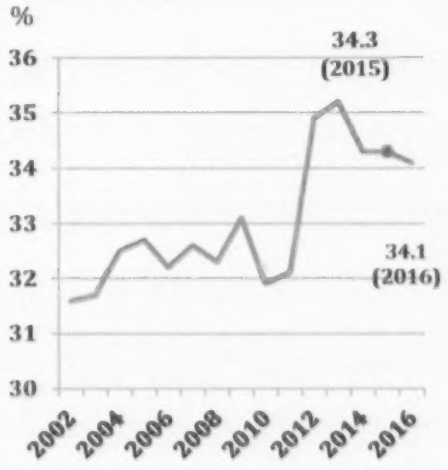
Helping Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity

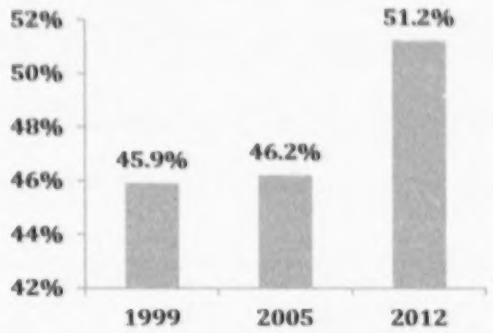
Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend	Data Source and Frequency
Literacy and Numeracy	Literacy: Individuals who have a level of knowledge and skills in reading and writing to permit them to fully participate in society.	10.7 percent of 15-year-old Canadians had low literacy skills in 2015, slightly down from 10.9 percent in 2012. 16.4 percent of adults (age 16-65) had low literacy skills in 2012. Low literacy indicates limited ability in understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written text which enable basic participation in society.	Program for International Student Assessment – Every three years 2018 data will be released in 2019. Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies – Every 10 years 2022 data expected to be released in 2023.
		 *Data collection on student competencies began in 2000 and occurs every three years.* *Data collection on adult competencies began in 2012 and every 10 years afterwards. Therefore, no trend line is available at this time.*	
	Numeracy: Individuals with the numeracy (mathematical) knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society.	14.4 percent of 15-year-old Canadians had low numeracy skills in 2015, an increase from 13.8 percent in 2012. 22.4 percent of Canadian adults (age 16-65) had low numeracy skills in 2012. Low numeracy indicates limited ability in communicating, using and interpreting mathematics in daily life.	Program for International Student Assessment – Every three years 2018 data will be released in 2019. Program for the International

Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend	Data Source and Frequency
		 *Data collection on student competencies in numeracy began in 2003 and occurs every three years.* *Data collection on adult competencies began in 2012 and every 10 years afterwards. Therefore, no trend line is available at this time.*	Assessment of Adult Competencies – Every 10 years 2022 data expected to be released in 2023.
Youth Engagement	Youth (age 15-24) who are not in employment, education or training.	9 percent of Canadian youth (age 15-24) were not in employment, education or training in 2017, down from 10.2 percent in 2016, and at a historic low. 	Labour Force Survey – Monthly August 2018 data will be released in September 2018. While new data will be available monthly, the indicator in the dashboard will be updated annually.
Relative Low Income	The proportion of Canadians who have less than 50 percent of the	13 percent of Canadians had less than half as much income as the median after-tax income in 2016, down from 14.2 percent in 2015.	Canadian Income Survey – Annually

Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend	Data Source and Frequency
	median after-tax income.* Median income is the middle of the income distribution: it is the amount at which half the population has more income, and half the population has less income. *Statistics Canada's Low Income Measure (LIM)		2017 data will be available in early 2019.
Bottom 40 percent Income Share	Share of total after-tax income held by 40 percent of the population at the bottom of the income distribution.	20.6 percent of total after-tax income went to Canadians in the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution in 2016, slightly up from 20.2 percent in 2015. 	Canadian Income Survey – Annually 2017 data will be available in early 2019.
	Supporting the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience		
Median Hourly Wage	The hourly wage at which half the population has a higher wage and half the population has a lower wage.	The inflation-adjusted median hourly wage was $22.62 (all Canadians) in 2017, similar to $22.66 in 2015. Women: $21.00 (2017) Men: $24.91 (2017)	Labour Force Survey – Monthly August 2018 data will be

Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend	Data Source and Frequency
		 Wages are in 2017 dollars, adjusted by the Consumer Price Index.	released in September 2018. While new data will be available monthly, the indicator in the dashboard will be updated annually.
Poverty Entry and Exit Rates	The poverty entry rate is the proportion of Canadians who, among two years of filing their taxes, entered low income in the second year (e.g. 2015) after not being in low income in the first year (e.g. 2014). The poverty exit rate is the proportion of Canadians who, among two years of filing their taxes, exited low income in the second year (e.g. 2015) after being in low income in the first year (e.g. 2014).	Between 2014 and 2015, 4.1 percent, or approximately 872,000 Canadians, entered poverty.  Between 2014 and 2015, 27.5 percent, or approximately 1.1 million low-income Canadians, left poverty.	Longitudinal Adminis-trative Databank – Annually Data on entry and exit rates for 2015/2016 will be published in November 2018. Poverty entry and exit rates are based on the Low Income Measure. The indicator is not currently available using Canada's Official Poverty Line, and it is not available in the territories. Further

Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend	Data Source and Frequency
			research will be conducted to explore the feasibility of improving data collection for this indicator so that it could be tracked using Canada's Official Poverty Line.
Average Poverty Gap	Average shortfall below Canada's Official Poverty Line for those living in poverty.	In 2016, Canadians who lived in families with incomes below Canada's Official Poverty Line were 34.1 percent, or $9,000 below this line, which is about the same as 2015.  In 2016, a total of $19.4 billion would have been required to lift all persons out of poverty. In 2016, the total dollar amount would have represented a payment of $610 from each Canadian not living in poverty to lift all Canadians out of poverty	Canadian Income Survey – Annually 2017 data will be available in early 2019.

Indicator	Description	Most Recent Data and Longer-term Trend
Asset Resilience	The ability of Canadians to cover unexpected expenses, or reduced income, by drawing from assets (e.g. a bank account) to prevent falling into poverty for a period of three months. (Savings of approximately $10,400 for the three months, based on low income in 2012.	51.2 percent of Canadians were asset resilient in 2012, up from 46.2 percent in 2005, meaning they had enough savings to maintain well-being for three months. 

Data Source and Frequency

Survey of Financial Security – Every three years

While data for 2016 recently became available, the results are not available at this time. Future analysis of the results for this indicator will be updated on the dashboard when available. Going forward, the Government may consider other definitions of asset resilience as new data becomes available (e.g., the appropriate number of months needed to cover unexpected expenses or reduced income to accurately define what it means to be asset resilient).

Statistics for Asset Resilience were based on the Low Income Measure and were derived from D. Rothwell and J. Robson, "The Prevalence and Composition of Asset Poverty in Canada: 1999, 2005, and 2012", International Journal of Social Welfare, 2017.

ANNEX 2:
GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT POVERTY REDUCTION

Since fall 2015, the Government of Canada has been committed to poverty reduction and improving the socio-economic well-being of all Canadians, as demonstrated by the actions listed below. These actions build on existing programs and initiatives that have a poverty reduction impact, such as the Canada Health Transfer and the Canada Social Transfer.

The actions have been organized under each pillar of *Opportunity for All*.

Lifting Canadians out of poverty by ensuring everyone's basic needs are met

Government Initiative	*Description*
Canada Child Benefit	Introduced in 2016, the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is a tax-free benefit that provides support to families to help with the cost of raising children. As of July 2018, the CCB thresholds and benefit amounts have been indexed to keep pace with the rising cost of living. With indexation, in the 2018–19 benefit year, the maximum annual benefit is $6,496 per child under 6 years of age and $5,481 per child aged 6 through 17. Families with less than $30,450 in adjusted family net income receive the maximum benefit in 2018–19. Both the maximum benefits and the income thresholds will be indexed in future years. Indexing the CCB provides an additional $5.6 billion in support to Canadian families over the 2018–19 to 2022–23 period. To help Indigenous peoples access the full range of federal social benefits, including the CCB, Budget 2018 announced $17.3 million over three years, starting in 2018–19, to expand outreach efforts to Indigenous communities, and to conduct pilot outreach activities for urban Indigenous communities.

Government Initiative	*Description*
Guaranteed Income Supplement	In 2016, the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) top-up was increased by $947 annually for the most vulnerable seniors: low-income seniors living alone.
Cancellation of the Age of Eligibility Increase to Old Age Security (OAS) and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)	In 2016, the Government cancelled the age of eligibility increase from 65 to 67 for Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement, which will ensure that all Canadians get the money they deserve faster to enjoy a dignified retirement.
Improving Uptake of Programs by Vulnerable Populations	To ensure clients from vulnerable groups receive the services and support they need, the Government is advancing several initiatives, including: • Canada Child Benefit take-up by Indigenous peoples: engaging communities on- and off-reserve to increase uptake of the program. • Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS): In fall 2016, Service Canada implemented an Action Plan to increase the take-up of the GIS, and meet the needs of low-income seniors while improving the overall service experience of Old Age Security (OAS) beneficiaries. • OAS Toolkit: tested and released a toolkit that aims to help community-level organizations support Canadians in understanding and applying for OAS.
Community Volunteer Income Tax Program	Through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, community organizations host free tax preparation clinics to help individuals access benefits and credits to which they are entitled. Budget 2018 doubled the size of the Program with a total annual ongoing investment of $13 million, beginning in 2018–19.
On-Reserve Income Assistance	Provides individuals and families with the means to meet basic needs for food, clothing and shelter and to acquire pre-employment skills to overcome barriers to employment. Budget 2018 invested $8.5 million over two years, beginning in 2018–19, to work with First Nations to understand how to make the

Government Initiative	*Description*
	program more responsive to their needs and to help them better transition from income assistance to employment and education. Budget 2018 also invested $78.4 million over two years, beginning in 2017–18, for case management services to help individuals transition from income assistance to employment and education.
Canadian Forces Income Support	The Canadian Forces Income Support (CFIS) Benefit is non-taxable, monthly income support that provides financial assistance to modern-day low-income veterans, survivors and dependent children to help them meet basic needs (e.g. food and shelter). The benefit is intended to support recipients while they seek employment.
Caregiver Recognition Benefit (for modern-day veterans)	The existing Family Caregiver Relief Benefit was discontinued on April 1, 2018, and replaced with the Caregiver Recognition Benefit (CRB). The CRB for modern-day veterans provides a more generous, non-taxable $1,000 monthly benefit payable directly to caregivers to better recognize and honour the vital role they play.
War Veterans Allowance	The War Veterans Allowance Benefit is a non-taxable, monthly income benefit that provides financial assistance to veterans who served in World War I, World War II or the Korean War who are in financial need.
National Housing Strategy	Announced in 2017, the 10-year, $40-billion National Housing Strategy will address a range of housing needs, from shelters and community housing, to affordable rental and homeownership. Details of the NHS are available at: www.cmhc-nhs.ca Key initiatives under the National Housing Strategy include the following: • The $13.2 billion **National Housing Co-Investment Fund** ($4.52 billion in contributions and $8.65 billion in low-interest loans) over 10 years, beginning in 2018–19, will create up to 60,000 affordable units and repair up to 240,000

Government Initiative	*Description*
	units; create or repair at least 4,000 shelter spaces for survivors of family violence; and create at least 7,000 new affordable units for seniors and 2,400 new affordable units for people with developmental disabilities. • Launched in 2016, the **Affordable Rental Housing Innovation Fund** includes funding of $200 million over five years to encourage new funding models and innovative building techniques. • The **Rental Construction Financing Initiative** includes $3.75 billion over four years, beginning in 2017–18, to provide low-cost loans to support the construction of new rental housing. • The **Federal Lands Initiative** includes $200 million over 10 years, beginning in 2018–19, to make surplus federal lands and buildings available at low- or no-cost for the development of affordable housing. • The **Federal Community Housing Initiative** includes funding of $500 million over 10 years, beginning in 2018–19, to maintain housing affordability in federally administered community housing, including co-operative housing, which is expected to benefit 55,000 households. • Beginning in 2020, the **Canada Community Housing Initiative** will provide $4.3 billion over eight years to support the provinces and territories as they protect and build a sustainable community housing sector. The program is cost matched and delivered by provinces and territories. • The **Provincial/Territorial Housing Priorities Fund** will provide $1.1 billion over nine years, beginning in 2019–20, for provinces and territories to address distinct housing priorities, including affordability, repair and construction, and will be cost matched and delivered by

Government Initiative	*Description*
	provinces and territories. • Launching in 2020, the **Canada Housing Benefit** will provide $4 billion over eight years directly to families and individuals in housing need and will be cost-shared, co-developed and delivered by provinces and territories. • **Distinctions-based Indigenous Housing Strategies** will support the successful implementation of specific housing strategies for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Budget 2018 announced funding of $1.5 billion, beginning in 2018–19, to support these Strategies. The Government is investing $300 million over 10 years, beginning in 2018–19, in **Northern Housing** to address urgent housing needs in the territories. • $2.1 billion over 10 years (2018–19 to 2027–28) to tackle homelessness through an expanded **federal homelessness programming**. A redesigned program, *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy*, will begin on April 1, 2019, targeting a 50% reduction in chronic homelessness. • **Evidence-based Housing Research** will include $241 million over 10 years, beginning in 2018–19, to enhance housing research, data and demonstrations.
Investments in Affordable Housing	Investments of $1.9 billion since 2011, with an additional $504 million for two years starting in 2016, in cost-matched funding to provinces and territories to support: • the construction of new affordable housing units; • the renovation and repair of existing affordable housing; • measures to support housing affordability such as rent supplements; and • measures to foster safe, independent living. Investments in Affordable Housing will be

Government Initiative	*Description*
	replaced by the Federal Provincial/Territorial Housing Partnership in 2019–20.
First Nations Housing	Annually, the Government of Canada spends an estimated $319 million to support the housing needs of First Nations on-reserve. Of this amount, $176 million supports the construction of approximately 900 new homes, the renovation of close to 560 existing houses, ongoing subsidy of approximately 24,300 households, and invests in capacity building for First Nations people living on-reserve.
Public Transit Infrastructure	Budget 2016 provided $3.4 billion over three years, starting in 2016–17, to upgrade and improve public transit systems across Canada. Budget 2017 provided an additional $20.1 billion over 11 years, starting in 2017–18. This funding will flow through bilateral agreements with provinces and territories to support the next phase of ambitious public transit projects. The Canada Infrastructure Bank will also invest at least $5.0 billion in public transit systems.
Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare	As part of Budget 2018, the Government of Canada announced the creation of an Advisory Council on the implementation of National Pharmacare to be headed by Dr. Eric Hoskins. The Council will report to the federal Ministers of Health and Finance. It will assess options and provide advice to the Government on how best to implement national pharmacare in a manner that is affordable for Canadians and their families, employers and governments. The Council will consult with a broad range of stakeholders and with Canadians, and is expected to deliver its advice to the Government in the spring of 2019.
Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy (CDSS)	Announced in December 2016, the CDSS employs a four-pillar approach (prevention, treatment, harm reduction and enforcement), is grounded in evidence and uses a public health lens to address drug use issues, including the national response to the opioid crisis.

Government Initiative	*Description*
	Current annual funding for the CDSS stands at approximately $135 million (planned spending for 2018–19). This includes an investment through Budget 2017 of **$102.4 million** over five years, beginning in 2017–18, and **$23.0 million** per year ongoing, to support the CDSS and to respond to the opioid crisis in Canada. Outside of the specific CDSS funding envelope, the federal government has also provided $231.4 million over five years through Budget 2018, beginning in 2018–19, for additional measures to help address the opioid crisis, including a one-time $150 million emergency treatment fund for provinces and territories. The Government has also provided additional emergency funding to British Columbia ($10 million) and Alberta ($6 million) to address the ongoing opioid crisis in these two jurisdictions, plus $5 million in targeted health care funding for Manitoba to assist with priority needs, including their opioid response.
Healthier First Nations and Inuit Communities	In 2016, the Government announced funding for several initiatives to improve health care facilities and the health of First Nations and Inuit communities. These measures include: • $270 million, beginning in 2016–17, to support the **construction, renovation and repair of nursing stations, residences for health care workers and health offices** on reserve. • $69 million over three years, starting in 2016–17, to address pressing **mental health and wellness needs in First Nation communities**. Budget 2017 Fnvested $828.2 million over five years, starting in 2017–18, to improve health outcomes of First Nations and Inuit, including: • **Non-Insured Health Benefits Program –** $305 million. This funding will make it easier for individuals and families to access culturally appropriate health care and mental health professionals, and it will expand the medical transportation benefit

Government Initiative	*Description*
	to ensure that expecting mothers do not have to travel alone if they require medical transportation outside the community to deliver their babies. • **Home and Palliative Care** – $184.6 million • **Mental Health Programming** – $118.2 million • **Maternal and Child Health** – $83.2 million • **Primary Care** – $72.1 million • **Chronic and Infectious Disease** – $50.2 million • **Drug Strategy** – $15 million for harm reduction activities that form part of the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy. Budget 2018 announced, beginning in 2018–19: • $498 million, with $97.6 million per year ongoing, to sustain access to **critical primary care services 24 hours per day, 7 days a week** in 79 remote and isolated First Nations communities. • $200 million, with $40 million per year ongoing, to enhance the delivery of **culturally appropriate addictions treatment and prevention services in First Nations and Inuit communities with high needs**. • $235 million to work with First Nations partners to **transform First Nations health systems** by expanding successful models of self-determination so that health programs and services are developed, delivered and controlled by and for First Nations. • $490 million over two years to preserve access to medically necessary health benefits and services through the **Non-insured Health Benefits Program**. $109 million over 10 years, with $6 million per year ongoing, to respond to high rates of tuberculosis in Inuit communities, and

Government Initiative	*Description*
	develop a better understanding of the unique health needs of Inuit peoples through the co-creation of a **Distinct Inuit Health Survey**.
Métis Nation Health	Budget 2018 proposed, beginning in 2018–19, $6 million over five years to support the Métis Nation in gathering health data and developing a health strategy.
First Nations Child and Family Services	The First Nations Child and Family Services program funds prevention and protection services to support the safety and well-being of First Nation children and families on-reserve. The program is undergoing a comprehensive reform to increase proactive support for children and their families, keep more children out of foster care and support them to grow up with a secure personal cultural identity. Budget 2016 announced $634.8 million over five years, beginning in 2016–17, to support both the immediate needs of First Nations children and to begin a process of reform to strengthen the First Nations Child and Family Services program. Following this, Budget 2018 announced more than $1.4 billion in new funding for the program over six years, starting in 2017–18.
On-reserve Water and Wastewater Infrastructure	Budget 2016 invested $1.8 billion over five years, starting in 2016–17, to address health and safety needs, ensure proper facility operation and maintenance, and end long-term boil water advisories on reserve within five years. Budget 2018 builds on prior investments and reaffirms the Government's commitment by proposing to provide an additional $172.6 million over three years, beginning in 2018–19, to improve access to clean and safe drinking water on reserve.
Clean Water and Wastewater Fund	Budget 2016 invested $2.0 billion over four years, starting in 2016–17, in a new Clean Water and Wastewater Fund. The fund supports projects that will also foster economic growth and support a cleaner and healthier environment for communities.

Government Initiative	*Description*
Rural and Northern Infrastructure	Because rural and northern communities have unique infrastructure needs, Budget 2017 invested $2.0 billion over 11 years, beginning in 2017–18, in rural and northern infrastructure that will help grow local economies, build stronger, more inclusive communities, and help safeguard the environment and the health of Canadians. Projects could include improving road access or expanding internet connectivity—building on progress already underway through a Budget 2016 investment in rural broadband of $500 million over five years, starting in 2016–17.

Helping Canadians join the middle class by promoting full participation in society and equality of opportunity

Government Initiative	*Description*
Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)	The Government invested $7.5 billion over 11 years, beginning in 2017–18, in more high-quality, affordable child care spaces across the country through the Early Learning and Child Care Framework. All bilateral agreements have been signed with provinces and territories. A portion of this investment will be dedicated to early learning and child care programs for Indigenous children living on- and off-reserve. In particular, beginning in 2017–18, the Government announced $360 million over three years for a distinct Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework, reflecting the unique cultures and needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children In Budget 2018, the Government announced $100 million over the next 11 years, beginning in 2018–19, for early learning and child care innovation, which will support new and innovative practices across the country,

Government Initiative	*Description*
	and $95 million to close data gaps in order to better understand what child care looks like in Canada.
First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative	Budget 2016 provided funding of $29.4 million in 2016–17 for the Government to improve child care facilities on-reserve and in Inuit communities that are in need of urgent repairs and/or renovations.
Sport for social development in Indigenous communities	Budget 2018 invested $47.5 million over five years, beginning in 2018–19, and $9.5 million per year ongoing, to expand the use of sport for social development in more than 300 Indigenous communities. This initiative is going to scale up a highly successful model developed by Right to Play that has led nearly 90 percent of participants to have a more positive attitude toward school and a greater sense of identity.
Increasing Take-up of the Canada Learning Bond	To increase the uptake of the Canada Learning Bond (CLB), Budget 2017 announced the reallocation of $12.5 million over six years, beginning in 2017–18, to explore new and innovative approaches. In support of this commitment, two approaches were launched: • As of March 2018, an Education Savings Referral Service (ESRS) is available as part of Service Ontario's Newborn Registration Service. The ESRS allows parents of Ontario newborns to learn about Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs), the Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG) and the CLB, and to start the process of opening an RESP, should they wish to do so, with a participating financial institution of their choice. • A Call for Concepts inviting eligible organizations to submit project concepts was launched in November 2017; 115 proposals were submitted, and funds are expected to be released in support of the successful projects in fiscal year 2018–19. • Budget 2017 also announced changes to the *Canada Education Savings Act*, which took effect January 1, 2018, designed to

Government Initiative	*Description*
	make it easier to access the CLB and the additional amount of the CESG by allowing the cohabitating spouse or common-law partner of the primary caregiver to request the education savings incentives on behalf of an eligible child. This amendment seeks to ensure that more children who are eligible for education savings incentives receive the support they need to pursue post-secondary education.
Pathways to Education Canada	Budget 2017 announced renewed support for Pathways to Education Canada by providing $38 million over four years, starting in 2018–19. With this renewed funding, Pathways will provide more vulnerable youth with the supports they need to succeed in school, including tutoring, career mentoring and financial help.
Canada Student Grants and Canada Student Loans	The Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP) provides Canada Student Grants (CSGs), Canada Student Loans (CSLs) and repayment assistance measures to help make post-secondary education more affordable for students from low- and middle-income families. In the 2016–17 school year, 531,000 students received over $3.6 billion in grants and loans. In addition, over 305,000 borrowers benefited from the Repayment Assistance Plan. To help make post-secondary education more affordable for students from low- and middle-income families and ensure that student debt loads are manageable, the Government has taken the following actions in Budget 2016 and 2017: • increased the CSG for low- and middle-income students by 50percent to provide up to $3,000 in non-repayable funding per school year; • expanded the income eligibility thresholds for the CSG for Full-Time Students so that even more students receive non-repayable assistance;

Government Initiative	*Description*
	• introduced a fixed student contribution model that will expand access to CSGs and CSLs; • increased the income eligibility thresholds for the Repayment Assistance Plan so that no single borrower has to repay their CSL until they start earning at least $25,000 per year; • introduced a three-year pilot project, beginning in 2018, that includes top-up funding of $1,600 per school year to the CSG for Full-Time Students for eligible adult learners and flexibility to assess eligibility for CSGs based on current (instead of previous) year's income; • expanded eligibility for CSGs and CSLs for Part-Time Students; and • expanded eligibility for CSGs for Students with Dependent Children.
Post-Secondary Student Support Program	Budget 2017 increased funding by $90 million over two years, beginning in 2017–18, to provide financial assistance to First Nation and eligible Inuit students enrolled in qualifying post-secondary programs to improve their employability.
Veterans' Education and Training Benefit	Beginning in April 2018, this new benefit provides more money for veterans honourably released on or after April 1, 2006, to go to college, university or a technical school after they complete their service. Veterans with 6 years of eligible service will be entitled to up to $40,000 of benefits, while veterans with 12 or more years of eligible service will be entitled to up to $80,000 of benefits.
Labour Market Transfer Agreements – Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs)	Each year, the Government invests over $2 billion in the LMDAs with provinces and territories so they can support Canadians with Employment Insurance (EI)-funded skills training and employment assistance. Through the LMDAs, EI benefits enable eligible individuals to gain skills and work experience through a combination of EI-funded interventions such as skills training

Government Initiative	*Description*
	and targeted wage subsidies. LMDAs also support the provision of employment assistance services for all Canadians such as employment counselling and job search assistance. Budget 2017 announced an additional $1.8 billion over six years, starting in 2017–18, for the LMDAs. In addition to these investments, the Government broadened eligibility for programs and services under the LMDAs, allowing even more Canadians, including under-represented groups such as persons with disabilities, women and Indigenous peoples, to access EI-funded skills training and employment supports. The Government is currently working with provinces and territories to implement recently signed amendments to the LMDAs to allow them to benefit from the additional funding and expanded eligibility announced in Budget 2017.
Labour Market Transfer Agreement – Workforce Development Agreements (WDAs)	In Budget 2016, the Government invested an additional $50 million in 2016–17 for the Canada Job Fund (CJF) Agreements and committed to conduct broad-based consultations with provinces and territories and stakeholders in 2016–17 to identify ways to improve the labour market transfer agreements (LMTAs) and to help guide future investments. Based on these consultations, Budget 2017 announced changes to the LMTAs with provincial and territorial governments in support of training and skills development that help Canadians find and keep good jobs. Budget 2017 invested $900 million over six years, starting in 2017–18, in new Workforce Development Agreements that consolidate the existing CJF Agreements, Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities and

Government Initiative	*Description*
	the former Targeted Initiative for Older Workers. This is in addition to the $722 million already provided to provinces and territories annually. The Government has signed the new WDAs with several provinces and territories and will announce details soon.
Skills Boost	Through Skills Boost, the Government is making better use of Employment Insurance (EI) flexibilities to support adult learners by: • promoting the use of current EI flexibilities that allow claimants to keep their benefits while pursuing training; and • expanding the use of existing flexibilities for eligible EI claimants who are long-tenured workers who wish to pursue self-funded full-time training and maintain their EI benefits. Skills Boost also includes a pilot project (as mentioned earlier) aimed at reducing financial pressures on adults wanting to go back to school by: • providing top-up grant funding of $1,600 per school year, beginning in 2018, to the Canada Student Grant (CSG) for Full-Time Students for eligible adult learners; and • flexibility to assess a student's eligibility for CSGs based on current (instead of previous) year's income for applicants whose financial circumstances have changed significantly.
First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy	The First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy is part of the Government of Canada's effort to enhance Indigenous peoples' education, participation in the labour market and economic success. The strategy supports initiatives through the Skills Link and Summer Work Experience programs to provide First Nations and Inuit youth with work experience, information about career options and opportunities to

Government Initiative	*Description*
	develop skills to help gain employment and develop careers.
Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program	Budget 2018 announced an investment of $2 billion over five years, and $408.2 million per year ongoing to support the creation of a new ISET Program which will replace the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy. The new program recognizes the unique needs of Indigenous peoples through funding streams targeted to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation and urban/non-affiliated Indigenous peoples.
Indspire	Budget 2017 provided funding of $25 million over five years, beginning in 2017–18, to assist Indigenous students with the financial support they need to complete their education, become self-sufficient, contribute to the economy and give back to their communities.
Future Skills	In Budget 2017, the Government invested $225 million over four years, starting in 2018–19, and $75 million per year thereafter, to establish a new organization to support skills development and measurement in Canada. In Budget 2018, the Government announced it will work with provinces and territories, the private sector, educational institutions and not-for-profit organizations to launch the new organization entitled Future Skills in 2018. Future Skills will bring together expertise from all sectors and leverage experience from partners across the country. It will include an independent Council to advise on emerging skills and workforce trends, and a research lab focused on developing, testing and rigorously measuring new approaches to skills assessment and development.

Government Initiative	*Description*
Pre-Apprenticeship Program	Budget 2018 announced $46 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, and $10 million per year thereafter for the creation of a new program to encourage under-represented groups to explore careers in the skilled trades.
Apprenticeship Incentive Grant for Women	Budget 2018 announced $19.9 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, to pilot the Grant to encourage women to pursue careers in male-dominated Red Seal trades, and to ensure that women are increasingly able to model leadership to other aspiring female tradespeople.
Gender Results Framework	Introduced in Budget 2018, the Gender Results Framework articulates the Government of Canada's goals with respect to gender equality, including how to measure success. Canada's key goals for gender equality are presented under six pillars: education and skills; economic participation and prosperity; leadership and democratic participation; poverty, health and well-being; gender-based violence and access to justice; and gender equality around the world. The Framework will serve as a tool to support decision making and priority setting. It will help the Government of Canada to maximize its impact across its many gender equality initiatives. The Government of Canada is developing plans to implement the framework as part of Budget 2018 commitments.
Career Transition Services Program (CTSP)	On April 1, 2018, the CTS Program was enhanced to equip veterans, Canadian Forces members, survivors and veterans' spouses and common-law partners with the tools they need to successfully navigate and transition to the civilian workforce. The services offered include coaching and job placement assistance.
Pay Equity Legislation	The Government has committed to introduce proactive pay equity legislation for federally regulated workplaces through budget implementation legislation in fall 2018. This

Government Initiative	*Description*
	legislation would ensure that, on average, women and men in federally regulated industries receive the same pay for work of equal value.
Pay Transparency	In Budget 2018, the Government committed $3 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, to provide Canadians with more information on pay practices of employers in the federally regulated sector. This would include converting existing pay information filed by federally regulated employers under the *Employment Equity Act* into more user-friendly online content, with specific attention paid to making existing wage gaps more evident. In addition, the Government will provide $1.5 million over 2018–19 and 2019–20 to host a major symposium on women and the workplace in the spring of 2019 that will bring together leaders in the private and public sectors to discuss and share best practices.
Enabling Accessibility Fund	The fund supports eligible organizations with the capital costs of construction and renovations related to improving physical accessibility and safety for people with disabilities in Canadian communities and workplaces. In 2017, the Government expanded the fund through an investment of $77 million over 10 years, starting in 2018–19.
Accessible Technology Development program	In Budget 2017, the Government invested $22.3 million over five years, beginning in 2017–18, to establish a new Accessible Technology Development program that will make it easier for Canadians with disabilities to more fully participate in the digital economy.
The Accessible Canada Act	In June 2018, the Government tabled Bill C-81, the Accessible Canada Act, in Parliament. If passed, the Act would help promote equality of opportunity by helping remove barriers and prevent new barriers

Government Initiative	*Description*
	from being created for persons with disabilities in the federal jurisdiction. The Government will invest $290 million over six years, beginning in 2018–19, to further the objectives of the legislation.
Targeted Employment Strategy for Newcomers (TESN)	Budget 2017 reallocated $27.5 million over five years, starting in 2017–18, and $5.5 million per year Thereafter, to launch the TESN. The TESN is intended to help reduce barriers and support newcomers as they put their skills to work in the Canadian economy. The TESN has the following three components: • improved pre-arrival supports, so that newcomers can begin the foreign credential recognition process before arriving in Canada; • a loan program to assist newcomers with the cost of having their foreign credentials recognized; and • targeted employment assistance measures to test innovative approaches to help highly skilled newcomers gain their first Canadian work experience in their profession.
Visible Minority Newcomer Women Pilot	Budget 2018 announced $31.8 million over three years, starting in 2018–19, to launch a three-year pilot to support programming for newcomer women who are also members of visible minorities.
Immigration and Refugee Legal Aid	Immigration and refugee legal aid helps asylum seekers navigate the refugee-determination process, allowing those who are successful to integrate into Canadian society and the economy more quickly. Budget 2017 provided $11.5 million ongoing for immigration and refugee legal aid, with an additional $2.7 million to address pressures in 2017–18 and 2018–19. Budget 2018 provided a further $12.8 million for 2018–19.
Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples	Created in 2017, Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples assists Indigenous peoples living in, or transitioning to, urban centres. The Government is providing

Government Initiative	*Description*
	$53 million each year for five years, beginning in 2017–2018. In 2017–2018, more than 120 organizations, projects or initiatives received funding for one to five years.
Affordable Access Program	Budget 2017 invested $13.2 million over five years, starting in 2017–18, in a new Affordable Access program, which will help service providers offer low-cost home Internet packages to interested low-income families.
Digital Literacy Exchange program	Budget 2017 invested $29.5 million over five years, beginning in 2017–18, for a new Digital Literacy Exchange program. The program supports non-profit organizations to implement initiatives that teach basic digital skills, including how to use the Internet safely and effectively, at pre-existing facilities such as public libraries, refugee housing complexes and seniors' homes. The program will focus on vulnerable groups such as low-income individuals and families, and seniors.
Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy	The Government is working with stakeholders to develop a Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy to provide better support and partnership opportunities for community organizations working to address persistent social and environmental challenges using innovative approaches, including social finance and social enterprise.
Social Procurement Practices	The Government is working to incorporate social procurement practices to generate opportunities for social enterprises or businesses owned or led by vulnerable groups.
Criminal Legal Aid	Access to criminal legal aid promotes fair legal proceedings and ensures access to justice for vulnerable persons, including economically disadvantaged people who are accused of serious and/or complex criminal offences and facing the likelihood of incarceration. This includes youth charged under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Current federal funding (2017–18 to 2021–22) is $670.9 million.

Government Initiative	*Description*
Youth Justice Services Funding Program	The Government provides $141.7 million in funding annually to the provinces and territories to assist in the delivery of programs and services that target youth in conflict with law, with a focus on diversion, rehabilitation and reintegration programming, all of which address the underlying socio-economic factors contributing to the poverty of vulnerable youth.
Canadian Family Justice Fund	In Budget 2017, the Government provided $16 million per year on an ongoing basis to facilitate access to the family justice system for families experiencing separation and divorce. Priorities relevant to poverty reduction include extending the reach of family justice programs, services and information to meet the needs of diverse and under-served populations.
Bill C-78: An Act to amend the Divorce Act, the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act and the Garnishment, Attachment and Pension Diversion Act and to make consequential amendments to another Act	Bill C-78, which proposes amendments to federal family law legislation, would support federal poverty reduction efforts by simplifying certain family law processes and helping families obtain fair and accurate family support (i.e. establishment and enforcement). Family support is a key factor in reducing the risk of poverty, including child poverty, after separation or divorce.
National Human Trafficking Hotline	Budget 2018 invested $14.51 million over five years, beginning in 2018–19, and $2.89 million per year ongoing, to combat human trafficking by establishing a Hotline including an online portal and a referral mechanism to social services and law enforcement.
Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence	The Government is investing $100.9 million over five years, beginning in 2017–18, and $20.7 million per year ongoing to establish a Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence, and coordinate the activities of six federal departments. The Strategy's initiatives are organized across three Pillars: prevention, supporting survivors and their families, and promoting a responsive legal and justice system, as well as to establish the Gender-Based Violence Knowledge Centre.

Government Initiative	*Description*
	In addition, Budget 2018 announced a further $101.5 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, and $22 million per year ongoing, to expand the Strategy. Five of the original six federal departments will use the funding to enhance two previously funded initiatives and create six new initiatives.
Protecting Vulnerable Women and Children	Budget 2018 invested $20.3 million over five years, beginning in 2018-19, to increase the resettlement program by 1,000 admission spaces in 2018 for vulnerable women and children.
Ensuring a Workplace Free of Violence and Harassment	On November 7, 2017, the Government tabled Bill C-65 in Parliament. C-65 will create a single, integrated framework that will protect federally regulated employees from harassment and violence in the workplace. In Budget 2018, the Government provided $34.9 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, with $7.4 million per year ongoing, to support Bill C-65.
Providing Legal Support to Victims of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace and Increased Awareness	Budget 2018 invested $50.4 million over five years, beginning in 2018–19, for outreach to, and legal aid for, victims of workplace sexual harassment.
Reintegration Support for Indigenous Offenders	The Government provides a variety of supports targeted specifically at Indigenous offenders to help them re-integrate into society following incarceration. These supports include: • improving their employability through the provision of culturally relevant skills training and programs while in custody; • support for release planning and post-release support; and • training and capacity building for communities implementing reintegration and alternatives to incarceration models. Budget 2017 provided $65.2 million over five years, starting in 2017–18, and $10.9 million per year ongoing thereafter to help previously incarcerated Indigenous peoples

Government Initiative	*Description*
	heal, rehabilitate and find good jobs.
Indigenous Courtwork Program	Each year, 75,000 Indigenous people in contact with the criminal justice system receive services from Indigenous Courtworkers. These services support fair, just, equitable and culturally relevant treatment and contribute to the critical priority of reducing the rate of incarceration amongst Indigenous people in contact with the criminal justice system.
Indigenous Justice Program (IJP)	The IJP contributes to decreasing over-representation of Indigenous peoples as victims, offenders and accused in the justice system. The Program provides culturally appropriate alternatives to the mainstream justice system that are sensitive to the living conditions in Indigenous communities, and mental health and addictions and other issues associated with intergenerational trauma. There are 197 community-based programs that serve 750 communities across Canada— in urban, rural, remote and northern communities.
Indian Residential School Settlement	Budget 2018 announced $248.6 million over three years, beginning in 2018–19, for services, including mental health and emotional supports to survivors and their families for the duration of the Indian Residential School Settlement.
Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics	Budget 2018 announced $6.7 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, and $0.6 million per year ongoing, for Statistics Canada to create a new Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics. The Centre will maintain a public-facing GBA+ data hub to support evidence-based policy development and decision-making.
Women's Program	The Women's Program is a grants and contributions program that funds non-profit and other organizations to implement initiatives that bring about equality and address or remove systemic barriers impeding women's progress and advancement. Budget 2018 proposed an

Government Initiative	*Description*
	additional $100 million over five years starting in 2018–19 to enhance the program.
Special Advisor on LGBTQ2 Issues	In November 2016, the Government appointed a special advisor on LGBTQ2 issues. The advisor is working with LGBTQ2 organizations from across the country to protect the rights of their members, and address discrimination against them—both historical and current. This builds on the Government's introduction in May 2016 and eventual passage into law in June 2017 of historic legislation (Bill C-16) to recognize and reduce the vulnerability of trans and other gender-diverse persons to discrimination, hate propaganda and hate crimes, and to affirm their equal status in Canadian society.
Strengthening Multiculturalism	Budget 2018 announced $23 million over two years, starting in 2018–19, to increase funding for the Multiculturalism Program and to support cross-country consultations on a new national anti-racism approach, which would bring together experts, community organizations, citizens and interfaith leaders to find new ways to collaborate and combat discrimination, and would dedicate increased funds to address racism and discrimination targeted against Indigenous peoples, and women and girls.
Addressing the Challenges Faced by Black Canadians	Budget 2018 announced $19 million over five years, beginning in 2018–19, to enhance local community supports for youth at risk and to develop research in support of more culturally focused mental health programs in the Black Canadian community.
Court Challenges Program	The Court Challenges Program provides financial support to Canadians to bring cases of national significance related to constitutional and quasi-constitutional official language rights and human rights before the courts.

Supporting the middle class by protecting Canadians from falling into poverty and by supporting income security and resilience

Government Initiative	*Description*
Canada Workers Benefit (CWB)	Previously known as the Working Income Tax Benefit, the Government announced, in Budget 2018, the CWB—a more generous and more accessible benefit. Through the strengthened CWB, which takes effect in 2019, the Government is: • increasing maximum benefits under the CWB by up to $170 in 2019 and increasing the income level at which the benefit is phased out completely and • increasing the maximum benefit provided through the CWB disability supplement by an additional $160. The Government also proposed to make it easier for people to access the benefit by making sure that anyone who qualifies will receive it when they file their taxes.
Employment Insurance (EI) Working While on Claim	In Budget 2018, the Government invested $351.9 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, and $80.1 million per year ongoing to make the current EI Working While on Claim pilot rules permanent (i.e. claimants can keep 50 cents of EI benefits for every dollar they earn in wages, up to a maximum of 90 percent of their previous weekly earnings) and expand the provisions to EI maternity and sickness benefits. The measure will encourage labour force attachment and allow claimants to earn higher amounts of employment income while on claim.
Reduced Waiting Period for EI Benefits	Budget 2016 announced that the Government would reduce the waiting period to receive EI benefits from two weeks to one week, effective January 1, 2017.
Increased Access to EI Benefits	In 2016, the Government eliminated higher eligibility requirements for the New-Entrant

Government Initiative	*Description*
	and Re-Entrant to the Labour Market categories. These claimants saw the number of hours they needed to qualify reduced from 910 hours to between 420-700 hours, depending on where they live in Canada.
Increased Support for Seasonal Workers	Through Budget 2018, the Government: • proposed to invest $80 million in 2018–19 and $150 million in 2019–20 through federal-provincial/territorial Labour Market Development Agreements to test new approaches to better assist workers in seasonal industries that experience a gap in income support before the start of the next season; and • reallocate $10 million to provide immediate income support and training to affected seasonal workers in 2018–19.
EI Special Benefits	Through Budget 2017, the Government introduced: • A new EI Family Caregiver benefit for adults of up to 15 weeks. This new benefit is available for eligible caregivers to provide care to a critically ill or injured adult family member; and • a new EI Family Caregiver benefit for children to replace and enhance the Parents of Critically Ill Children benefit. Up to 35 weeks of benefits will continue to be available, with eligibility expanded to a wider support network that includes immediate and extended family members, rather than only parents. The EI **compassionate care benefit** is also available to assist Canadians in balancing work and caregiving responsibilities when caring for a loved one who is gravely ill, for up to 26 weeks of temporary income support.
EI Parental Sharing Benefit	Through the new EI Parental Sharing Benefit, the Government proposed to invest $1.2 billion over five years, beginning in 2018–19, and $344.7 million per year ongoing, to support greater gender equality in the home and in the workplace. The

Government Initiative	Description
	measure would provide up to five additional weeks of EI parental benefits (paid at 55%) when both parents agree to share parental leave. For parents who choose the extended parental benefits, up to eight additional weeks (paid at 33%) would be available to them. This benefit will be available in 2019 to all EI-eligible families, including adoptive parents and same-sex couples.
Flexible Work Arrangements	Budget 2017 proposed amendments to the *Canada Labour Code* to give federally regulated workers the right to request flexible work arrangements from their employer, such as flexible start and finish times and the ability to work from home, in addition to new unpaid leaves to better balance work and family demands.
Leave for Victims of Family Violence	In Budget 2018, the Government committed to amending the *Canada Labour Code* to provide five days of paid leave to workers in the federally regulated jurisdiction who are victims of family violence or the parent of a child who is the victim of family violence. This builds on job-protected leave for survivors of violence which was introduced in Budget 2017.
Wage Earner Protection Program	As announced in Budget 2018, the Government will propose legislative amendments to the *Wage Earner Protection Program Act* to increase the maximum payment under the Wage Earner Protection Program to seven weeks of Employment Insurance insurable earnings from four. Changes will also be made to make eligibility for the Program more equitable, so that workers who are owed wages, vacation, severance or termination pay when their employer files for bankruptcy or enters receivership receive greater support during a difficult time.
EI Claims Processing and Service Delivery	Budget 2018 announced up to $90 million over three years, starting in 2018–19, for EI claims processing and service delivery. Funding will be linked to EI claims volumes and will provide responsiveness to changing

Government Initiative	*Description*
	economic conditions. This will ensure that EI recipients continue to receive timely and accurate benefit payments. Budget 2018 announced $127.7 million over three years, starting in 2018–19, to further improve EI call centre accessibility and ensure Canadians receive timely and accurate information and assistance with EI benefits.
Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Enhancement	To help today's workers—tomorrow's seniors—the phase-in of the CPP enhancement will begin January 1, 2019. The enhancement will gradually increase the CPP's income replacement from 25 percent to 33.3 percent. It will also extend the range of earnings that are subject to the CPP. Taken together, these measures will increase the maximum CPP retirement pension by 50 percent over 40 years.
Protecting Canadians' Pensions	In Budget 2018, the Government announced that it will be consulting with pensioners, workers and companies to ensure Canadians continue to have a strong retirement income system.
Prescription Medications and Health Innovation	To promote a more innovative health care system, Budget 2017 included: • Improving access to prescription medications, lowering drug prices and supporting appropriate prescribing through an investment of $140.3 million over five years, starting in 2017–18, with $18.2 million per year ongoing, for Health Canada, the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board and the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health. • Addressing health data gaps, supporting improved decision-making and strengthening the reporting on health system performance through an investment of $53.0 million over five years, starting in 2017–18, with $15.0 million per year ongoing, for the Canadian Institute for Health

Government Initiative	*Description*
	Information. • Expanding e-prescribing and virtual care initiatives, supporting the continued adoption and use of electronic medical records, helping patients to access their own health records electronically, and better linking electronic health record systems to improve access by all providers and institutions through an investment of $300 million over five years, starting in 2017–18, for Canada Health Infoway. • Continuing to accelerate innovations in all provinces and territories through an investment of $51.0 million over three years, starting in 2019–20, with $17.0 million per year ongoing, for the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement.